# THE

# HISTORY

OF

# Captain and Miſs RIVERS.

Nihil nox præterea

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Captain and Mrs RIVERS.

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# Captain and Miſs RIVERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

*DUBLIN:*

PRINTED BY WILLIAM PORTER,

FOR MESSRS. COLLES, BURTON, H. WHITESTONE, BRYNE, W. PORTER, LEWIS, MOORE, AND HALPEN.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

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# Captain and Miſs RIVERS.

BEHOLD our heroine now moving in a ſphere ſhe was born to have adorned. Loving and beloved by the Marquis and his Lady, and all thoſe who had the pleaſure of her acquaintance; and ſaw Mrs. Pianelli as often as ſhe pleaſed at the Hotel, where her huſband was often intreated to preſide at a private concert, in which ſeveral ladies, gentlemen, Madame de Polignac, and Louiſa were performers. That young lady had juſt attained her ſeventeenth year, but her judgment and diſcretion ſurpaſſed thoſe who

had tripled that number. She visited every where with Madame de Polignac, and like her enjoyed solitude, whenever that lady preferred her closet and retirement. Then again they would meet, read to each other, play upon the harp or any other instrument, compare their drawings, or converse together, till the visiting hour, at which time they either went out or received company. Miss Rivers, however, did but seldom accompany the Marchioness to Versailles: the uncommon attention and respect which was paid her there, made her still more humble, on one side; and on the other, the envy and jealousy she created in the breast of several of the ladies who constantly paid their respects to his Majesty, made her prefer going as seldom as possible.

Full ten months had Louisa passed in this happy situation, when the visibly declining health and chearfulness of the Marquis de Polignac alarmed both her and the Marchioness. That nobleman, as I have before observed, had so strong a propensity

to

to play, that it at length brought on his ruin. His exceſſive tenderneſs and love for his wife would not permit him to inform her of the precipice on which he now ſtood. Having loſt a princely fortune, and an eſtate of near ten thouſand Louis d'ors a year ſold to his creditors, his unfair, deſtructive creditors; reſerving only to himſelf an annuity for life of three thouſand Louis d'ors. Thus ſituated he grew weary of life; reflecting on his paſt errors, and that ſhould he depart this life, his amiable and worthy wife, who had brought him a noble fortune, muſt loſe her jointure, and be contented with four hundred a year, which was all that had been ſettled on her by way of pin-money; though, if ſhe had occaſion for as many thouſands, ſhe might have commanded them.

The Marquis now kept much more at home than he uſed to do, to the great ſatisfaction of his lady, who, though ſhe would never importune or compel her huſband to ſpend his evenings with her, yet was always the moſt happy when he joined his

company to her and that of Louiſa. Both ladies were generally more chearful when the amiable Marquis proved to be the only man to form their trio, than when any other was preſent. How great then her diſtreſs, when ſhe frequently obſerved him keeping ſilence while Louiſa and herſelf were accompanying each other on different inſtruments; and thinking him liſtening to their performance, how great was her ſurpriſe to find him in tears, which he would immediately endeavour to hide, and avoid explications by leaving the room. Both Louiſa and herſelf tried all their ſkill and penetration to find out the cauſe; but all in vain. And if the Marchioneſs, when alone with her huſband, in the moſt tender manner inquired the reaſons of this unuſual melancholy, all the anſwers he gave her were evaſive, and that he himſelf could not account for it. The Marchioneſs, not ſo eaſily ſatisfied, propoſed ſending for a phyſician; to which he at laſt, though with great reluctance, conſented; and even the ſeeing

of him was merely in compliance with his wife's requeſt, and to oblige her, being but too ſenſible it was not in the power of medicine to heal a diſtracted mind. The phyſician was of opinion, however, that change of air would be of infinite ſervice to the Marquis, as it would entirely extirpate that lowneſs of ſpirits and dejection which he ſeemed inclined rather to encourage: that therefore he would not reccommend an over-warm climate; but gave his advice that Florence was a moſt deſirable ſpot, the air there being keen and healthy, which he did not doubt would procure the deſired effect. The Marquis was exceedingly reluctant to the taking this journey: but, at the repeated entreaties of his amiable wife, to which Louiſa joined hers, and at the ſame time conſidering he could live infinitely cheaper in Florence than he could poſſibly do in Paris, and that he might probably ſave two thouſand Louis d'ors out of the three he was now reduced to as an annuity, if he paſſed a twelvemonth or longer there;

which he would ſet apart as a ſmall additional proviſion for the Marchioneſs, ſhould ſhe outlive him; and theſe conſiderations gaining ground, he agreed to go wherever the ladies thought proper to conduct him. Every thing for their journey being got ready with the utmoſt expedition, our amiable Louiſa had a ſharp trial to ſuſtain. Her parting from Madame Pianelli, and perhaps for ever, was the moſt bitter pang ſhe had ever experienced. That good woman likewiſe, drowned in tears, held her claſped to her boſom, as if ſhe was to be rooted there. Pianelli was ſo moved he could not ſtand the conflict, and left the room. At laſt theſe faithful friends divided themſelves from each other, with mutual proteſtations of everlaſting friendſhip, and promiſes of conſtantly writing to each other; Louiſa throwing herſelf into the carriage which the Marchioneſs had entered before her, not having had the power any longer to be a witneſs of the heart-breaking ſeparation of her friend from Mrs. Pianelli.

One

One comfort Louiſa had however, though but a ſmall one; which was, that Mrs. Pianelli was to remove the day following into the country, which ſhe had ardently wiſhed for; her huſband having taken a ſmall elegant cottage for that purpoſe, where ſhe intended to ſpend at leaſt four months ſecluded from the gay and vain.

On Miſs Rivers' getting into the carriage, neither the Marchioneſs nor herſelf opened their lips to each other; the hearts of both being ſo oppreſſed as to deny their tongues the faculty of ſpeech, till they were nearly arrived at the Hotel, when Madame de Polignac, being the leaſt intereſted with regard to Mr. Pianelli, and the moſt apprehenſive leſt their ſtriking grief ſhould affect her already melancholy and beloved huſband, broke ſilence firſt, and entreated Miſs Rivers to conceal her affliction as much as ſhe poſſibly could before the Marquis, for fear of increaſing his dejection:—"We will give it vent, my "dear," ſaid ſhe, "when we are alone: "I'll drop tear for tear with you; ſo that

" by mutual grief we ſhall mutually con-
" dole with each other: only try to ap-
" pear compoſed before this beſt of men."
—Louiſa promiſed to uſe all her efforts to oblige her friend: and arriving at the Hotel, where the Marquis only waited the coming of the ladies, who quitting the carriage, and ſtepping into the poſtcoach, he took his place oppoſite to them; having previouſly given orders to his ſteward to diſpoſe of the vis-a-vis and horſes which the ladies had juſt quitted.

They ſoon left Paris behind them. The morning was fine, the roads remarkably good, and the country delightful. Louiſa behaved with uncommon fortitude during the journey; for though ſhe ſobbed half the night when alone, yet not a tear or ſigh eſcaped her before the Marquis; but on the contrary, ſhe amuſed him by deſiring him to obſerve every beautiful object that preſented itſelf before them: not a pleaſant hill or beautiful valley eſcaped her notice, and on which ſhe did not deſcant in the moſt agreeable and enter-

tertaining manner: and when they arrived in Florence the Marquis was ſurpriſingly better; which his amiable wife entirely attributed to Louiſa's ſprightly and lively converſation, and thought herſelf under the greateſt obligations to her. Louiſa's grief was likewiſe greatly alleviated by the time they had finiſhed their journey; for her underſtanding was too ſolid to continue fretful and deſpairing at an unavoidable event. She had likewiſe the ſatisfaction of hearing from her dear friends the Pianelli's as often as ſhe could wiſh, and was ever punctual in anſwering their letters.

As the Marquis was evidently much better after only three months reſidence at Florence, he propoſed to the ladies to partake of ſome of the public amuſements; for hitherto they had lived like recluſes ſince their arrival in Italy, walking and riding out excepted; his indiſpoſition being a ſufficient apology for their ſolitary way of living: but being now ſo much better, they had received ſeveral

viſits from the nobility, and having returned them, they were all invited to a magnificent ball, to which they agreed to go —No ſooner did Louiſa enter the ball-room, than ſhe attracted, as uſual, the eyes of the whole aſſembly: but among the gentlemen, none ſeemed to diſtinguiſh her more than a middle-aged man of a noble figure, but in whoſe looks there appeared ſomething harſh and peremptory, and very diſtant from prepoſſeſſing her in his favour. The particular attention with which he viewed her covered her with bluſhes, and induced her to ſcreen herſelf behind a lady, that ſo ſhe might be concealed and hid from his view.

As ſhe had in a manner but juſt made her appearance, time had not permitted any one to ſolicit the favour of her hand in a minuet; and ſhe dreaded leſt this too bold reviewer ſhould be the firſt to aſk her, in which caſe ſhe could not have refuſed. But how agreably was ſhe ſurpriſed, when, venturing to look round

the room, a lady having juſt riſen from her ſeat, and thereby having furniſhed her with an opportunity of viewing the company, when ſhe ſaw Lord Belmont, the ſame young gentleman, who near a twelvemonth paſt had preſented her with the fan ſhe had dropped on her leaving the drawing-room at Verſailles, and who was but that moment come in, advance towards her, and in the moſt reſpectful and engaging manner entreated the honour of dancing with her. Louiſa's face was in a moment covered with the moſt beautiful rouge innate modeſty had ever painted, and being diſengaged ſhe bowed conſent. Madame de Polignac beheld with pleaſure Miſs Rivers having her countryman for her partner: and when the etiquette for the minuets was over, and Lord Belmont led her out to dance one, the whole aſſembly ſeemed to have loſt every faculty but that of ſight, which ſeemed entirely fixed on the lovely pair, who were now exhibiting the moſt exquiſite graces, which charmed every beholder.

der. For although Miſs Rivers was timid to a degree, yet had ſhe none of that aukward *mauvaiſe honte*, ſo frequently eclipſing every amiable talent in a young lady: her attitude was graceful, her ſteps juſt, her looks modeſt, and her countenance lovely. Nor was Lord Belmont leſs admired, being one of the moſt handſome men of the age. As he conducted her to her chair, he farther entreated ſhe would favour him with a continuance of dancing with her the remaining part of the evening; which was granted.

Lord Belmont then went up to the very ſame gentleman, who, as I have already obſerved, had not the honour of being in Louiſa's good graces; and from his manner of accoſting him, he ſeemed to pay him filial obedience, which was received by the other with a cold reſpect and parental authority, which ſurpriſed her not a little, as ſhe had underſtood from a lady, when at Pianelli's, that Lord Belmont's father was dead.—After ſome converſation Lord Belmont left this rather

ther diſpleaſed gentleman, and paid his devoirs to two ladies, who from their different ages appeared to be mother and daughter, whom he immediately quitted on the approach of the gentleman laſt mentioned, and inſenſibly directed his ſteps to that part of the room where Miſs Rivers was ſeated; but who was ſo effectually ſecured by ladies who ſurounded her, of which Madame de Polignac was always the firſt, that every avenue to approach her was denied him; for Louiſa had always made it a maxim, whenever at a public aſſembly, to be placed between two ladies, and likewiſe to have as many before and behind her as ſhe could poſſibly aſſemble: and the Marchioneſs having frequently obſerved this laudable caution in her young friend, and commended her for it, ſhe generally ſeconded her by muſtering all the ladies round her ſhe had any acquaintance with; by this little ſtratagem preventing the men from too near an approach, who, too often encouraged by the free acceſs many ladies allow

low them, will tell idle tales, or rehearſe ſcandal, for want of a more rational ſubject: and this conduct of Louiſa likewiſe ſerved as a tacit rebuke to that part of the female ſex who ſet a value upon their charms according to the number of danglers who addreſs them.

Lord Belmont was thus reduced to keep at an humble diſtance; which, however, he turned to his advantage, by contemplating the idol of his ſoul at leiſure, and in ſilence; and though unobſerved by Louiſa, yet he was not ſo by the Marchioneſs who did not loſe one ſingle look he caſt towards her friend, nor did ſhe miſs a ſingle ſigh that eſcaped him.

The minuets over, each gentleman haſtened to his reſpective partner, which diminiſhed the croud about Louiſa, and facilitated Lord Belmont's preſenting her with his hand, which ſhe modeſtly accepted, and joined with him in the cotillons and country dances, in which ſhe gained as much admiration, and received as many applauſes, as ſhe had before in

her

her minuet.—As ſhe was looked upon by the whole aſſembly as a relation of the Marchioneſs de Polignac, and of courſe was ſuppoſed to be a native of France, although ſhe converſed freely in the Italian language, conſequently no inquiries were made about who and what ſhe was; no not even by Lord Belmont, who, having received the ſame information in that particular when in Paris, concluded it certainly was ſo.

Madame de Polignac having left off dancing ſome time previous to her journey into Italy, was with other ladies, who, like her, did not join in that juvenile amuſement, a ſpectatreſs of that innocent diverſion, ſo well becoming youth, and eſpecially the amiable groupe which now partook of it: yet did ſhe not ſuffer her attention to quit Lord Belmont or Louiſa for a moment; aud ſhe plainly perceived this young nobleman was ſeriouſly in love with Miſs Rivers. His deportment towards her, during the ſeveral dances they went down together, was full of reſpect,

attention, and admiration, the ſure and unerring attendants of real love. Louiſa, on her ſide, gave her the moſt exquiſite ſatisfaction, by her eaſy and modeſt conduct during the whole evening: and being unwilling to make any inquiries concerning Lord Belmont, which ſhe certainly would have done had he been engaged with any other lady except Louiſa, for that very reaſon ſhe choſe to forbear. But having caſt her eyes on that gentleman and lady Lord Belmont had entered into converſation with after his firſt complimentary addreſs to Louiſa, and ſeeing them entertain each other rather in too ſerious and important a manner for ſuch a gay and brilliant aſſembly, aſked a lady who ſat next her, who they were? "The "lady is Engliſh," anſwered ſhe, "and "ſo is the gentleman. She is the Coun- "teſs Dowager Belmont, the mother of "Lord Belmont, the happy partner of "Mademoiſelle la Riviere. The young "lady who came in with her, and who "cannot boaſt of many charms, is her

"ſiſ-

" ſiſter's daughter, and whom ſhe has an
" inclination to marry to her ſon, who has
" not the leaſt partiality for her. The el-
" derly gentleman is Lord Croſslove,
" brother to her deceaſed Lord, uncle
" and guardian to the amiable Belmont,
" who is kept in ſuch ſubjection to him,
" as almoſt denies him the having a will
" or opinion of his own: for by a ſtrange
" caprice of his late father, he left this
" young man entirely dependant on this
" croſs-grained uncle, till he ſhall have
" attained his twenty-ſixth year; and till
" then he is not to be looked upon as be-
" ing of age. And ſhould he form any
" ſerious connection, or marry, before he
" is of that age, it is in his uncle's power
" to deprive him of a fortune of twelve
" thouſand pounds ſterling a year, which
" was acquired by the late Earl, and no
" ways entailed on his poſterity. The
" family eſtate, to which he is heir, not
" being above two thouſand pounds a
" year, beſides a jointure of a thouſand,
" which comes to him at the demiſe of his

" mo-

" mother, is all this worthy young man
" can claim, and not even that till he is
" arrived at the above-mentioned period
" of years.—Lord Croſslove, Lady Bel-
" mont, and Miſs Dupeley her niece,
" have been at Florence this month paſt,
" and have themſelves related theſe
" ſtrange ſettlements to thoſe with whom
" they have contracted an intimacy, in
" order to prevent deſigns which might
" perhaps be formed to gain Lord Bel-
" mont, whoſe alliance will be an honour
" to any family. He himſelf has been
" here but a week, having parted with an
" Engliſh gentleman (who had accompa-
" nied him in his travels) at Nice, where
" he had been ill for ſome time, and by
" the phyſician's opinion was adviſed to
" return to England, his native air being
" judged the moſt conducive to the re-
" eſtabliſhment of his health. That his
" Lordſhip, however, would not leave
" him till he was ſo far recovered, as to
" endure the fatigue of travelling; and
" having obtained that ſatisfaction, he

" himſelf

" himſelf had come to Florence to meet
" his mother, couſin, and uncle: That
" Signor Cagliari (the huſband of the nar-
" rater) viſited Lord Belmont, but had
" not the leaſt inclination to cultivate an
" acquaintance with Lord Croſslove:
" That ſhe had paid and received a viſit
" from Lady Belmont; and there it
" reſted."

This communicative lady would ſtill have continued, had not a general ſummons to ſupper put an end to the converſation. As this was quite an amicable ſupper, all ceremony of rank and precedency was by unanimous conſent laid aſide, and each cavalier was to place himſelf by the ſide of his partner. Lord Belmont, in rapture, paid Miſs Rivers every attention imaginable. The ſatisfaction ſo viſible in his countenance, at being ſo near the object of his love, received every now and then a conſiderable check from the ſevere looks of his uncle, who had placed himſelf exactly oppoſite to him, in order to obſerve his words and actions to her;

all

all which Madame de Polignac noticed, ſhe being ſeated at the other ſide of Lord Belmont, whoſe diſtinguiſhed behaviour to Louiſa gave her as much pleaſure as the arbitrary looks of Lord Croſslove filled her with regret.

Supper being ended, and ſeveral lively ſubjects having been diſcuſſed during the deſert, moſt of the young people reſorted again to the ball-room, to renew their dancing; and Lord Belmont begged permiſſion of Louiſa to conduct her thither: but ſhe politely excuſed herſelf from dancing any more, it being now two o'clock, and if agreeable to Madame de Polignac, ſhe would rather not return any more into the ball-room.—As that lady's ſentiments always coincided with thoſe of Louiſa, ſhe heartily concurred in her propoſal of returning home; and the more ſo, as it was the firſt time the Marquis, as well as herſelf and friend, had been out ſo late, ſhe apprehended it might prove prejudicial to the firſt; and having ordered her carriage, Lord Belmont attend-

ed

ed them to it, having previouſly aſked permiſſion to wait on them the next morning; which was granted.

In going home the Marquis complimented Louiſa on her conqueſt of Lord Belmont, who, he was ſure, was her indiſputable captive.—"And I am much "miſtaken," interrupted the Marchioneſs, "if Lord Croſslove is not as much "her devoted admirer as his nephew poſ-"ſibly can be: for never did I ſee," continued ſhe, "a man ſo thoroughly abſent "to all that ſurrounded him in this brilli-"ant aſſembly, and ſo entirely attentive "to all Miſs Rivers's words, looks, and ac-"tions, and ſo much out of humour at his "nephew's apparent felicity."—"Your "kind partiality for me, Madam, and that "of the Marquis," ſaid Louiſa, "induces "you to think that all thoſe who are com-"plaiſant and polite to me, entertain ſe-"rious ideas about me, and are real and "profeſſed lovers; though I cannot but "own that Lord Belmont was rather more "particular, throughout the whole even-

"ing,

" ing, both in his attention and converſa-
" tion, than I have ever experienced be-
" fore. I may perhaps judge more fa-
" vourably of him than I have hitherto
" done of any other man, on account of
" his being my countryman."—" But
" his remarkable attention and diſ-
" tinguiſhed preference of you to all the
" other ladies, my dear," interrupted the Marchioneſs, " could not proceed
" from your being his countrywoman too,
" as he is ignorant of that cirumſtance,
" unleſs from ſympathy. You certainly
" did not inform him of it, did you?"—
" Undoubtedly not, Madam," replied Louiſa. " Then," ſaid the Marquis,
" there muſt be another motive, Miſs Ri-
" vers, for that extraordinary and re-
" ſpectful aſſiduity; and what can that
" motive be, but ſincere and unfeigned
" love? conceived at firſt ſight of you,
" a twelvemonth ago, and nouriſhed un-
" doubtedly ever ſince by the flattering
" hope of beholding its object again.
" Having obtained that bliſs, it has mani-

" feſted

" feſted itſelf in raptures, too explicit to " paſs unobſerved, at being near you all " the evening, and enjoying, in conſe- " quence of being your partner, your " agreeable converſation without inter- " ruption."—It was well for Louiſa there were no lights about the carriage, to diſcover the emotion by which the moſt lovely bluſh was painted on her countenance at theſe words of the Marquis; and his lady likewiſe favoured her not replying to them (as ſhe was at a loſs) by immediately adding, " Depend on it, my- " dear, we ſhall have two propoſals to- " morrow morning."—The carriage at the ſame time ſtopping at their hotel, they parted each to their reſpective apartments.

The next morning Madame de Polignac imparted to Louiſa all that had been communicated to her by Madame de Cagliari, reſpecting Lord Belmont and his family, of which ſhe had likewiſe been informed in part by other ladies, and at which her young friend did not ſhew the

leaſt ſurprize, having at times obſerved the authoritative looks of Lord Croſslove towards his nephew, who on his ſide ſeemed concerned about it; which had made her aſſume a more reſerved air, unwilling to give Lord Belmont the leaſt uneaſineſs on her account.

As ſhe was confeſſing theſe artleſs ideas of hers to the Marchioneſs, that lady exclaimed, "Ah, my dear Louiſa, that "hitherto frozen heart of yours is ſubdued: your own avowal proclaims it." —"Alas! my dear Madam," anſwered the bluſhing Louiſa, "what an idea you "ſeem to entertain of my frankneſs! "Have I not always been averſe to create "inquietude in any one, if I could avoid "it?" —"True, my dear," replied Madame de Polignac: "but be ingenuous, "and anſwer me according to that ineſtimable ſentiment you are ſo deſervedly "eſteemed for: Did you not find leſs "repugnance at being ſo many hours in "the company of Lord Belmont, than "you would have done, had you been ſo

"long

" long with any other perſon?"—Louiſa, confuſed to the higheſt degree, and with downcaſt eyes, owned, that ſhe never had ſeen a man before, whoſe converſation had proved ſo agreeable to her as that of Lord Belmont: but that, nevertheleſs, ſhe had not the vanity to ſuppoſe his Lordſhip was inclined to ſacrifice his liberty to her by an offer of his hand; and even if it was ſo, it was not in her power to accept it, as ſhe could not diſpoſe of herſelf till ſhe had attained her twenty-firſt year; and having but juſt compleated her eighteenth, was it likely a man like Lord Belmont would ſubmit to thoſe reſtrictions? —" But remember, dear Louiſa," ſaid the Marchioneſs, laughing, " your re-
" ſolution of not diſpoſing of yourſelf
" till you attain a certain age, is only to
" ſubſiſt till you meet with a perſon
" whoſe birth, morals, and principles,
" would enſure you the certainty, firſt, of
" your own happineſs, and, next, that of
" your father's not being aſhamed to call
" ſuch a perſon his ſon-in-law."—" And

"is ſtill ſo," replied Louiſa: "and al-
"though I am as yet but young, the ex-
"perience I have gained of the world,
"through the many viciſſitudes my life
"has been ſubject to, ſurpaſſes that of
"many, who are four times my age; and
"is a ſufficient caution not to be deluded
"by reſpectful and aſſiduous diſtinctions,
"till I am thoroughly convinced the per-
"ſon who diſplays them is in reality
"what he pretends to be. And till ſuch
"a conviction, I hope it will always be
"in my power to guard my inclinations:
"at leaſt I'll uſe my utmoſt efforts to
"prevent their wandering: to which
"your enlightened underſtanding, and the
"ſtudy of uſeful and inſtructing books,
"will greatly contribute."—"Why ſo
"grave, my dear Louiſa?" replied
the Marchioneſs. "I admire you every
"day more and more: you are a noble
"girl in owning Lord Belmont's con-
"verſation did not diſpleaſe you: and
"at the ſame time I cannot enough com-
"mend you for your prudence.—But I
"will

" will no longer diſtreſs you.—The diſ-
" agreeable circumſtance his Lordſhip
" lies under from his guardian uncle, will
" make him very cautious how he ad-
" dreſſes you, which he certainly will do
" by the firſt opportunity. Tell me,
" then, ſhould he propoſe his hand
" and heart to you, would you not think
" it neceſſary, in ſuch a caſe, to acquaint
" him with your birth, family, and mis-
" fortunes ?"—" Since you, Madam," re-
plied ſhe, " condeſcend to deſire my opi-
" nion about it, give me leave, in my
" turn, to aſk you, whether it would not
" be better, ſhould ſuch a propoſal be
" made, to defer theſe particulars to a
" ſecond interview, and only thank his
" Lordſhip for the honour he intends me ?
" and that I beg he will allow me a few
" days to conſider, before I can give him
" an anſwer ? leſt a precipitate aſſent, by
" acquainting him with my misfortunes,
" might be conſidered by him, not as re-
" ſulting from a conſciouſneſs of his vir-
" tues, but as drove by neceſſity, to ex-

" tricate me from perhaps future indi-
" gence: which would be an ungrateful
" ſuſpicion in me, both of yourſelf and
" of your noble huſband. But at his
" ſecond viſit, after his declaration,
" which, if he is really ſerious, he cer-
" tainly will make me, then I ſhall think
" it expedient to inform him of every
" particular relating to myſelf. What
" think you, Madam? Do you differ
" from me in this opinion?"—" Differ
" from you, my dear Miſs Rivers!" an-
ſwered the Marchioneſs, " your argu-
" ments are nervous and perſuaſive; and
" I can only ſay, with one of your Eng-
" liſh poets, 'I ne'er ſhall look upon
" your like again,' if once I loſe you."

The ladies then ſat down to read Pope's Homer to each other, when the ſervant announced Lord Belmont.—Louiſa's colour forſook her, at the hearing of the name; and her heart beat with uncommon violence. The Marchioneſs ſmiled, and bade her recal her courage.

On

On Lord Belmont's entering into the room, the roſes, which had but a moment before forſaken her cheeks, reaſſumed their lovely wonted ſeat with redoubled luſtre; and Louiſa acquired preſence of mind ſufficient, as ſhe thought, to receive his Lordſhip with becoming politeneſs, unconcerned about every thing elſe.—If he was captivated with Louiſa's charms the night before at the ball, he was infinitely more ſo that morning, on ſeeing her entirely diveſted of all ſuperfluous ornaments (neceſſary appendages to public aſſemblies); and her glowing natural beauties outſhone whatever before he had deemed lovely in woman: her converſation too had a thouſand attractions in it. And ſeeing an Engliſh book lying by her, he aſked the Marchioneſs, whether ſhe or Mademoiſelle Rivière read Engliſh? "Both," anſwered ſhe: "but Mademoi-"ſelle is my miſtreſs in the Engliſh lan-"guage, and I may add, in the Italian "too," continued ſhe.

Lord Belmont, more and more enchanted with the perfections of the amiable Miſs Rivers, was unwilling to loſe any time in endeavouring to ſecure ſo valuable a prize. He therefore, after ſome heſitation, which generally accompanies a ſincere and unfeigned attachment, opened his whole ſoul to Louiſa (in preſence of the Marchioneſs, who had been requeſted by the latter not to leave her). He began with the impreſſion ſhe had made on him the moment he beheld her at Verſailles; the inquiries he had made concerning her; and the cruel neceſſity he was then under of leaving Paris that evening, being thereto compelled by his uncle, Lord Croſslove: That her image followed him every where: And having no connections whatever with any one perſon at Paris, of whom he could receive any conſolatory information about her, he was ſeized when at Nice, where his uncle had choſen to direct his ſteps, with a melancholy which nothing could divert, his ideas being entirely devoted to the

the abſent object of his happineſs: That ſolitude alone had any charms for him; or the attending of a ſick friend, whoſe ſufferings in ſome manner reſembled his own, though they originated from different cauſes: That when Lord Croſslove left Nice for Florence, he had intreated his Lordſhip to leave him there for a few days longer, as his health required it: That when his friend had recovered ſufficient ſtrength to return to England, his own melancholy increaſed: And having, by repeated letters, been ſummoned to attend Lady Belmont and Lord Croſslove at Florence, he had obeyed their injunctions, as all climates appeared inſupportable to him, when not enlightened by thoſe bright eyes he had left behind him at Paris: That he did not know, till the morning preceding the ball, that the lovely Miſs Rivers was to adorn it with her preſence, owing to the retired way of living Monſieur and Madame de Polignac had obſerved during their reſidence at Flo-

rence: That the inſtant he entered the aſſembly-room, his hitherto unquiet heart received as it were new life in beholding the object ſo eſſential to his happineſs: That his admiration of her increaſed every moment; but his ſituation was ſuch as not to leave him at liberty to engage himſelf by an indiſſoluble tie till he had compleated his twenty-ſixth year, of which near fourteen months were yet to come.—He then informed them of every particular relating to that circumſtance; and laſtly told them, that Lady Belmont had a ſtrong inclination to call Miſs Dupeley her daughter-in-law, for which he had never given the leaſt room to entertain a thought about; and as Lord Croſslove ſeemed diſpleaſed with the apparent attachment he had ſhewn to Miſs Rivers, for motives beſt known to himſelf: That in order to avoid giving uneaſineſs either to his mother or uncle, till he could ſtile himſelf his own maſter, he entreated the lady would forgive him his preſumption for having dared to offer his

hand

hand under thoſe circumſtances, as he was under the neceſſity of concealing his engagements, ſhould he be happy enough to receive a favourable anſwer, till the ſtipulated period with regard to his age, would permit him to make a public avowal of his eſteem, reſpect, and unalterable affection for her. Louiſa thanked him in the moſt amiable manner (though much confuſed) for the honour of his offer, and told him that under his circumſtances, it was expedient a clandeſtine correſpondence muſt be ſupported, to which ſhe ever had entertained a natural averſion; unaccuſtomed to diſguiſe, it would ſit very aukward upon her to aſſume a behaviour which her heart diſavowed, and as there was but a ſhort time between the preſent inſtant, and the period of his being of age, ſhe thought it much more adviſeable his Lordſhip ſhould give over all ideas concerning her, till then, as he might publicly and openly propoſe to any lady whatever; and, added ſhe, bluſhing,

there

there are but few who would not think it an honour to poſſeſs the eſteem of one who like him, to all appearance, was an honour to his country, and whoſe virtues and principles, as far as ſhe could judge, promiſed permanent happineſs. "Then "I muſt be miſerable, Madam," replied he. "It was not my intention, though "ſo much wiſhed for, to viſit you often "during my ſtay here, to avoid ſuſpici- "on, as I abhor from my ſoul duplicity; "and being ſenſible was I admitted fre- "quently to the honour of your compa- "ny, my eyes, my looks, my actions, "all would betray me, and proclaim me "your profeſſed admirer, which for in- "numerable reaſons I muſt conceal; all "I beg, all I entreat, all I ſue for, is, "that you will make me happy in own- "ing that my propoſal is not diſagreea- "ble to you, and that you have no diſ- "like to my perſon." Louiſa, above all mean diſſembling, anſwered, "Neither, "upon my word, my Lord; but don't "you think yourſelf it is requiſite you

" ſhould be better acquainted with who I
" am, and what I am? and I likewiſe
" am ignorant of your family, and I
" think it a moſt eſſential point, before
" any engagement is entered into, both
" parties ought to be throughly informed
" with who it is they engage."—" As to
" you, Madam," anſwered he, " you
" are all perfections, all my heart could
" wiſh; your behaviour and accompliſh-
" ments ſufficiently declare your family;
" perhaps allied to that noble lady, or to
" the Marquis de Polignac—With regard
" to me, whatever informations either
" yourſelf, the Marquis and the Mar-
" chioneſs may require, you will honour
" me by inquiſition, by a line to Lord C.
" the Engliſh ambaſſador at Paris, who I
" am certain will give you an implicit ac-
" count of me and my family. Then
" let not the incertitude relating to my-
" ſelf, prevent you from ſealing my hap-
" pineſs, with the promiſe you will not
" accept any propoſal whatever or by
" whomſoever, or enter into any alli-
" ance,

" ance, till the happy Belmont can com-
" mand his actions, and claim you as his
" wife." At theſe words Louiſa's face was covered with crimſon, and with downcaſt eyes, unable to ſpeak, endeavouring to conceal her confuſion by looking ſteadfaſtly upon the ground.

Lord Belmont rather encouraged by her ſilence and the amiable emotion ſo viſible in her countenance, proceeded, by adding, " I am confident, Madam, it is the height " of preſumption in me, in thus abruptly " confeſſing my reſpect for you, and to " dare to urge you for a reply on which " all my hopes of happineſs depend: " but weighty reaſons compel me to act " thus precipitately, elſe I would not " have wounded your delicacy by this raſh " declaration, which I would not have " preſumed to make, till time, and a " more thorough knowledge of myſelf " and family, would have convinced you " that my tongue was the real interpreter " of my heart."—" May I beg, my Lord," interrupted the Marchioneſs, " you will

" inform Mademoiſelle, what other rea-
" ſons you can have beſide thoſe you
" have already mentioned."—" Ah,
" Madam," interrupted he, " the moſt
" repugnant to my ſoul —But not to keep
" you in ſuſpence, Lord Croſslove is ſo
" captivated with this lady's charms, that
" he intends this very day to make her
" a propoſal of his heart, hand, and for-
" tune, which is conſiderable, at her
" feet."—" Lord Croſslove!" exclaimed both ladies at once, " Lord Croſslove!" repeated Louiſa, lifting up her eyes from the ground, where they had been fixed, and timidly looking at Lord Belmont. " Yes, Madam, replied he, " my uncle,
" that formidable rival will exert all his
" power to make me miſerable for ever.
" Let me conjure you then to give me
" ſome hopes, if you think it poſſible to
" entertain a favourable opinion of me."
" Permit me Lord Belmont," replied Louiſa (with the moſt enchanting teme-rity) " to conſider for a few days on your
" propoſal—it is of too great conſequence

" not

" not to deliberate maturely before I can
" give you an anſwer. Monſieur and
" Madame de Polignac, who I can anſwer
" for as being your friends, require I
" ſhould conſult them in ſo momentous an
" affair. It is their conſummate pru-
" dence, which muſt be my guide. I owe
" you likewiſe a confidence, which relate
" to myſelf, as it muſt be imparted to you,
" before any thing can be concluded."
Lord Belmont ſtarted at the words confi-
dence, related to herſelf, which the Mar-
chioneſs obſerving, interrupted Louiſa by
ſaying, " No other confidence, my Lord,
" than tends to her glory. She has rela-
" tions"—Lord Belmont in his turn inter-
rupted the Marchioneſs, and ſaid, " I
" dreaded an impediment to my happi-
" neſs; but your countenance hath huſhed
" all my fears—proceed I entreat you Ma-
" demoiſelle, (ſpeaking to Louiſa) to ho-
" nour me with your confidence."—" I am
" not, my Lord," replied Louiſa, " what
" I appear to be, though of a noble fa-
" mily, yet in no way related to Mon-

" ſieur

"ſieur or Madam de Polignac, who "honour me with their friendſhip—my "parents—"—Here Louiſa fetched a deep ſigh, and her eyes were inſtantly filled with tears, which prevented her proceeding. Lord Belmont looked at her with eyes of love, and would have given the world to have wiped away the pearly drops as they fell; but reſpect, and aſtoniſhment at her affliction, prevented him. As he ſtood gazing at thoſe beauties, which her grief made ſtill more lovely, he was rouſed from the pleaſing contemplation by the rattling of a carriage driving into the coach yard, and to his utmoſt amazement, ſaw it was Lord Croſslove himſelf, who came to pay the ladies a viſit. Fortunately for Lord Belmont, he had ordered his chariot and ſervants to return home, intending to have walked back to his own hotel.

The Marchioneſs ſeeing the porter had already admitted his Lordſhip into the outer court, had but juſt time to order her groom of the chamber to conduct Lord

Croſslove

Croſslove into the drawing room, and that ſhe would wait on him immediately; then turning to Lord Belmont, apologized for leaving him, and, added laughing, "unleſs "you chooſe to be introduced to him you "had better repeat your viſit at another "time."—"To-morrow, then, if you "will permit me Madam," anſwered he; and looking at Louiſa, who looked pale and dejected, "Oh Mademoiſelle," exclaimed he, "will you not revive my "drooping heart with ſome dawn of "hope?" As Louiſa remained ſilent, the Marchioneſs ſaid, "To-morrow I "ſhall be engaged out with the Marquis, "from ten in the morning, till the hour "of toilette; but the day following, my "Lord, about twelve at noon, I ſhall be "glad of the honour of your company, "when I ſhall take care not to be inter-"rupted—but now I muſt beg you will "leave us, as I hear Lord Croſslove is "aſcending the ſtairs." Lord Belmont again turned to Miſs Rivers, and with dumb eloquence ſeemed to implore her

compaſſion,

compaſſion, but Louiſa unable to ſpeak, ſhe never having had ſuch a trial before, ſtood with down caſt eyes, and in the greateſt confuſion imaginable. Madame de Polignac looking rather impatient, which urged Lord Belmont once more to entreat Miſs Rivers to give him leave to hope. "To hope, my Lord," anſwered ſhe, "alas, what can I ſay?"—"What is the "moſt agreeable to your inclinations, "Madam," replied he—"Then be aſſur-"ed," ſaid Louiſa, "I will never liſten to "Lord Croſslove's addreſſes, and—and "—" there ſhe ſtopped. "Proceed, "moſt amiable of women," exclaimed Lord Belmont, "and free my ſoul from "deſpair, ere I leave this houſe. May "I hope for a favourable anſwer?" Louiſa then aſſuming a little courage, ſaid, "Your virtues and merit entitle you to "it, my Lord, and if your happineſs "depends on my good opinion of you, "you need not fear that my anſwer will "be repugnant to your hopes." Lord Belmont, in an ecſtacy of joy, ſnatched

her

her hand, which he kiſſed with all imaginable fervour, ere Louiſa had time or thought to withdraw it from him. Then with looks of love and reſpect, bowed and took his leave.

Louiſa begged the Marchioneſs would excuſe her accompanying her into the drawing room. "You are right, my "dear," ſaid that lady, "I wont give "that bold lover the pleaſure of ſeeing "you till he ſues for it." Then going herſelf to join Lord Croſslove, who, at her appearance, made a thouſand apologies for his coming ſo early (though it was then near two o'clock) that he ought to have conſidered their retiring late the night before, and of courſe, he looked upon it as a miracle to have the honour to ſee her then, and alledged in excuſe, the earneſt inclination to have the happineſs of paying his reſpects to her and her amiable niece, had prompted him for once to neglect the etiquette generally obſerved on thoſe occaſions. Madame de Polignac, tired with this preface, interrupted

rupted his Lordſhip by ſaying, the hour was not at all improper for a morning viſit, for had he procraſtinated it, ſhe might in all probability have been deprived of the honour of ſeeing him that morning, as ſhe was thinking of preparing for the toilette in about half an hour. Lord Croſslove bowed, and aſked to be honoured with the ſight of Mademoiſelle, who, he hoped, was not too much fatigued with her dancing, which had inſpired every body with admiration.— "Not at all, my Lord," replied the Marchioneſs, "but I think ſhe is dreſſing."— "I ſhould be ſorry if the Lady was at "preſent thus engaged," anſwered he, "as I would have the honour of ſpeak- "ing to her particularly; and although "what I preſume to communicate to her "may be ſaid before you, and it is my "wiſh you ſhould be preſent, yet with- "out the young lady herſelf I cannot "poſſibly declare my ſentiments." The Marchioneſs rang the bell, and having ordered a ſervant to requeſt Miſs Rivers'

company

company, ſhe entered in a few minutes after into the drawing room. Never did ſhe look ſo lovely in her life as ſhe did then; Lord Belmont's converſation had painted the moſt amiable confuſion in her countenance, which bordered a little upon melancholy; but it was a pleaſing melancholy, a ſoft attracting penſive look, which gave a ſweetneſs to her features, commanding at the ſame time both love and reſpect; nor was it to be wondered at, Lord Belmont, among the many who had made propoſals to her, was the only man ſhe ever had felt herſelf intereſted for. The intricacy of the ſituation in which ſhe was involved, gave her pain, and ſhe wiſhed him happy, which at preſent he ſeemed to have but a diſtant proſpect of.

At her entrance into the drawing room, Lord Croſslove roſe, and bowing to her as if ſhe had been a divinity, would ſcarcely permit himſelf the acquittal of the accuſtomed compliments before he made her a ſerious declaration of the violent love with which ſhe had inſpired

inſpired him, and an offer of his hand, and to ſettle ten thouſand pounds ſterling a year on her, as pocket money, and two thouſand more as a jointure, and in caſe ſhe ſhould outlive him, without having any children by him, his whole fortune, which was noble, ſhould be hers. Many other emoluments and proſpects of happineſs, both to herſelf and him, he mentioned, together with an account of his family, relations, and connections, and concluded with the hopes Monſieur and Madame de Polignac would be his advocates and ſupport his intereſt. Louiſa had all this while been ſilent; her heart was agitated with a thouſand different ſentiments, but not one in favour of Lord Croſslove; for, reflecting on the amiable qualities of Lord Belmont, and the tyrannical proceedings of that man who now ſued for her hand, ſhe beheld him with abhorrence, little reflecting, by the bye, that her partiality for the nephew, increaſed her averſion for the uncle, in whoſe

breaſt

breaſt love for her was as powerful, (tho' not ſo judiciary) as it could poſſibly be in that of Lord Belmont. However ſhe ſtood excuſed in preference of the laſt, who was poſſeſſed of all the amiable qualities a truly honeſt mind could glory in; whereas Lord Croſslove was only the ſhadow of all the perfections ſo conſpicuous in Lord Belmont. The diſparity of years might likewiſe be reckoned an objection; but the greateſt objection of all was, that fourteen months before the preſent period, ſhe had beheld Lord Belmont, and from that period her heart had whiſpered her, that as far as ſhe could judge from outward appearance ſhe never had ſeen a more amiable man. This laſt idea her critical ſituation had not permitted her however to entertain herſelf with, as her utmoſt care and anxiety had been to give ſatisfaction to the Pianelli's, and to ſecure herſelf the friendſhip of Madame de Polignac, in both which points ſhe had ſucceeded. But to return to Lord Croſslove. Louiſa, perceiving he had

had ceaſed to ſpeak, and was waiting for her reply, thanked him in the moſt reſpectful manner for the honour of his offer; but at the ſame time excuſed herſelf from accepting it. "Your reaſons "Madam, if you pleaſe," ſaid he, ſomewhat piqued. "I am too young my "Lord," replied ſhe, "am not my own "miſtreſs, and have no inclination at all "to enter into the married ſtate."—"As "to your firſt objection," ſaid he, affecting a juvenile air, "that will correct it"ſelf every day—your ſecond, implies, "I muſt have Monſieur and Madame de "Polignac's conſent—Well, that I ſhall "aſk, and make no doubt of obtaining "it—As to your laſt, give me leave to "doubt your ſincerity a little there; un"leſs you differ from other young ladies, "who in general wiſh for nothing more "than to be under the auſpices of a huſ"band to procure themſelves more free"dom." Louiſa bluſhed at this uncouth ſpeech, and the Marchioneſs with a ſerious look, begged his Lordſhip would

make ſome diſtinction in a rule, which, notwithſtanding his unfavourable opinion of the ſex, ſhe truſted was not general. "I ſtand corrected, Madam," anſwered he, "and aſk your and the young "lady's pardon, and earneſtly entreat "you will permit my viſits to your "niece; who, I hope, in a very little "time, to convince that a lady who has "diſcretion and underſtanding, can ne-"ver be too young to marry. I intend "taking the firſt opportunity of paying "my reſpects to the Marquis, and ſolicit "his conſent may join your approbati-"on." "Mr. de Polignac will be ho-"noured by your Lordſhip's viſit," replied the Marchioneſs, "but neither his "or my conſent are neceſſary to procure "Mademoiſelle the honour of your "hand, it is her will and inclination "alone, which is to determine her choice." "I thought," reſumed Lord Croſslove, "the young lady did juſt now acknow-"ledge herſelf not to be her own miſ-"treſs."—"In one ſenſe ſhe is not, as

"ſhe

" ſhe has a father, at leaſt ſhe hopes"—
" A father!" interrupted his Lordſhip,
" who is he—where is he—let me go to
" him—fly to him—write to him—tell
" me, you charming creature, where is
" he?" " The laſt time I had the hap-
" pineſs of hearing from him, he was at
" Gibraltar," replied Louiſa, and added in a ſorrowful tone of voice, " ſeveral
" years have rolled away ſince I have
" heard from him, which, as it oppreſſes
" me with grief, ſo it leaves me in utter
" darkneſs with regard to his deſtiny."

As Lord Croſslove did not poſſeſs any ſentiment of tenderneſs, compaſſion, or pity, but, on the contrary, ſelf-love being his idol, he had no ideas that thoſe amiable and heart-gaining faculties, thoſe attributes of the ſoul, could have any exiſtence but in the brain of poets and authors; and without conſidering Louiſa's extreme delicacy, and the power thoſe paſſions had over her, he cried out, " He's dead, he's ſhot, he's kill'd! Don't
" think of a dead father; take a living

" husband to your arms, my fair one,
" who, like me, will make you happy
" as a queen." Louisa had well-nigh dropped out of her chair at this brutal, this unhuman exclamation; but her resentment kept her from falling: and assuming all the courage in her power, said, with a faultering voice, " Happy
" with you, my Lord! Sooner shall light
" unite with darkness than you acquire
" the power of making me happy. A
" man that is void of humanity, and
" who can with unparallelled levity
" wound a woman's heart, already near-
" ly broken for the loss of a dear and
" worthy parent, that man is the fittest
" society for himself. I must therefore
" beg leave to withdraw, and intreat you
" will suppress all other intended visits
" to me in future, as I shall be under the
" necessity of having myself denied to
" you, should you come to the hotel on
" my account." and rising from her seat, was for leaving the room, when he cried out, " Stay, Madam! I conjure you,



" hear

" hear and pardon me! What I have ſaid
" proceeded not from inhumanity, as
" you unkindly ſtile it, but merely to
" divert your growing melancholy, on
" ſeeing tears riſing in your eyes; and I
" really thought it the only way to diſſi-
" pate and diſperſe them."——" Your
" Lordſhip," replied Miſs Rivers, " cer-
" tainly hath a right to act according to
" your way of thinking; but as your
" ideas and mine differ ſo widely, and
" are ſo oppoſite to each other, I have no
" right to controul yours; and undoubt-
" edly no one hath power to compel
" mine. It is therefore but juſt we
" ſhould leave each other to the liberty
" of enjoying them according to our in-
" clinations."—" You ſhall ever think
" and act as you pleaſe hereafter, Ma-
" dam," reſumed he; " ſay but you will
" be mine, and——" " That I ne-
" ver can be, my Lord," anſwered ſhe;
" for, abſtracted from the diſparity be-
" tween your Lordſhip and me in every
" reſpect, my firm reſolution is never to

"beſtow my hand on any man till I ſhall
"have attained my twenty-firſt year.
"Then, and not till then, can or ſhall I
"deem myſelf at liberty to diſpoſe of
"myſelf. Should propitious Heaven
"reſtore me to my father before that
"time, then his will is to guide me."—
"Oh madam! give me but hopes," ex-
claimed Lord Croſslove, "and I'll wait
"with patience till you are of age, ſo I
"can but be bleſſed with your hand and
"heart: and all the tedious ſpace be-
"tween that period and my happineſs,
"ſhall be employed to ſoften that obdu-
"rate heart into ſome compaſſion for me.
"Give me but leave to viſit you; time
"produces wonders: I cannot live with-
"out you; but muſt and will follow
"you like your ſhadow."—"It cannot
"be, my Lord," reſumed ſhe: "my
"heart diſdains receiving and encourag-
"ing aſſiduities, which it is ſure it can
"never reward:" and making him a
curteſy, ſhe left the room.

"What

" What can be done, Madam, with this " ſtubborn niece of yours ?" ſaid Lord Croſslove to Madame de Polignac, when Louiſa was withdrawn.—" Mademoiſelle " la Rivére is no niece of mine," anſwered that lady ; " but is as dear to me as if " ſhe was my own child: but not being " related to me, I have no power over " her, nor indeed any inclination to con- " trol her will, or actions, in any the " leaſt particular."—" But you have in- " fluence, I ſuppoſe, Madam," replied he : " and in a mind that boaſts ſuch re- " fined ſentiments, ſurely gratitude muſt " have ſome place there."—" That I am " aſſured of," ſaid ſhe: " the moſt un- " bounded gratitude, love, and affection, " dwells in her heart, and manifeſts itſelf " in every circumſtance towards me."— " Then, Madam," ſaid his Lordſhip, " let me entreat you to intercede for me ; " for I cannot live without her. I had " indeed flattered myſelf the pleadings " of another in my favour would have " been unneceſſary, having been inform-

" ed the young lady was an indigent re-
" lation of yours, entirely dependent on
" your goodneſs; from whence I had
" conceived hopes, that a man of my rank
" and fortune would not only have been
" received graciouſly, but even that the
" noble propoſal I made her would have
" been accepted with pleaſure. She
" charmed me from the moment I be-
" held her, but I have no reaſon to think
" ſhe was pleaſed with my admiration of
" her. She was indeed ignorant of the
" ſentiments I entertained for her: and
" another impediment which prevented
" my imparting them to her (though at
" firſt ſight) was my jackanapes of a ne-
" phew, who, as her partner in the dance,
" engroſſed her converſation all the even-
" ing: but I have taken care he ſhall not
" croſs my deſigns any more."

Madame de Polignac took from hence an occaſion to inquire a little into Lord Belmont's affairs. " He is my brother's
" ſon, Madam," ſaid he, " and left under
" my

"my tuition till he ſhall have attained
"his twenty-ſixth year. If before that
"time he marries, or forms any connec-
"tions contrary to my will, he ſhall not
"have a ſix-penny piece out of his great
"fortune. Now as I ſuſpect him to be
"ſmitten with your adopted niece, I was
"willing to obtain the promiſe of her
"hand before he dared to declare him-
"ſelf; not dreaming that, ſituated as ſhe
"is, ſhe would have refuſed me. I muſt,
"therefore entreat you, Madam, to uſe
"all your influence in my behalf."

The Marchioneſs was too well convinced that Lord Croſslove was a man not only devoid of all ſentiment, but that he was likewiſe very ill-bred, ill-mannered, and arbitrary, and only gloried in his riches. She therefore thought it prudent not to reveal Miſs Rivers's family to him, leſt, by application to her uncle, ſhe might be importuned to marry Lord Croſslove, to ſcreen Lord Rivers from the imputation of not protecting her as

his niece. To this end (and to avoid as much as poſſible giving any ſuſpicion of Lord Belmont) after thanking him for the honour of his propoſal, ſhe contented herſelf with ſaying ſhe would try her influence in his Lordſhip's behalf with Miſs Rivers; but ſhould that be unavailing, ſhe begged he would relinquiſh all farther hopes concerning her: and riſing from her ſeat, excuſed herſelf from any longer converſation, on account, added ſhe, laughing, of that important buſineſs the toilette.

Lord Croſslove haſtily roſe, and having once more recommended his and Miſs Rivers's intereſt to her, took his leave, very ill ſatisfied with his reception, his pride being greatly mortified: and as he did not doubt but his nephew would meet with a much more favourable one, ſhould he propoſe himſelf; and as he had ſtrong motives for believing he would, he formed a ſcheme for removing this worthy young man out of Florence, which he actually effectuated, and gave the finiſhing

ſtroke

ſtroke to the dreadful calamities which befel our lovely heroine ſoon after.

Arrived at his hotel, he repaired to Lady Belmont's apartment, and, without any regard to truth, informed her that her ſon had propoſed himſelf to that charming French girl, who, although beautiful, yet had not a farthing of her own, and entirely dependent on Madame de Polignac's charity: yet poor as ſhe was, ſhe ſhould be Lady Croſslove: nor would he ſuffer any young fellow to rival him in his affections, or ſnatch away the only woman upon earth he had ever truly loved. But as Mademoiſelle had not yet given the young ſpark his anſwer, it ſhould be his buſineſs to prevent his ever receiving it, by ſending him off immediately for Switzerland, where he ſhould order him to remain till he was of age: "and long "before that time I ſhall have married "that charming tormenter, and Dupeley "your niece, ſtands a good chance of be-"coming Lady Belmont, if ſhe plays her "cards well."—"But how," ſaid Lady Bel-

Belmont, "can you accompliſh this exile of my ſon? for he will look upon it as ſuch; and I greatly fear he'll not comply."
—"Not comply!" anſwered he: "he "ſhall and muſt comply. I will inform "him of my intended engagement with "Mademoiſelle; nay, I'll even hint I have "Mr. and Madame de Polignac's appro-"bation, which of courſe muſt put a to-"tal ſtop to his pretenſions. And as he "has not yet had an opportunity to de-"clare himſelf to the young lady, I will "take care he ſhall not; for I will ſtick "cloſe to him all this evening, and not "till to morrow morning, when the "coach will be got ready, ſhall he know "any thing of my deſign: and even then "I ſhall only propoſe him to accompany "me a few miles out of Florence; and "when in the chaiſe, I ſhall diſcloſe my "mind to him, by ordering him to look "on Mademoiſelle de la Riviére as his "future aunt; and I ſhall take eſpecial "care no written correſpondence ſhall be "carried on between them, by having "all their letters intercepted. And

"ſhould

" ſhould I find out, that during his ab-
" ſence he deludes my vigilance by writ-
" ing to her, that inſtant I diſinherit him,
" according to the will of his father, not
" to enter into a ſerious courtſhip without
" my approbation."—" But," ſaid Lady Belmont, who really loved her ſon, " I
" don't like to be ſo ſoon ſeparated from
" my dear George: it is but ten days
" ſince his arrival here, after a long ab-
" ſence from me. Surely he will obey
" your commands, although he ſtays in
" Florence."—" Obey my commands," exclaimed Lord Croſslove: " I tell you
" he loves her; and the little baggage
" has no averſion to him; of that I am
" certain: and would you have me run
" the hazard of being outrivalled by him?
" for although he would not preſume to
" viſit her againſt my expreſs orders to
" the contrary, yet is it in my power to
" prevent their meeting in public? And,
" when there, can I hinder them from
" expreſſive looks, mutual glances, and
" ogling? No. George ſhall go; that

" I am

"I am determined on. And let me but "once call myſelf the huſband of this "coy little lady, you ſhall ſend for him "as ſoon as you pleaſe; for I'll warrant "I need not fear him then." Lady Belmont, knowing the perverſe obſtinacy of her brother-in-law, and willing to ſee her niece married to her ſon, did not oppoſe him any farther, but left him to act as he pleaſed.

Madame de Polignac immediately after Lord Croſslove's departure, went up to Louiſa, who ſhe found penſive and melancholy. "I come, my dear," ſaid ſhe, "to try my influence over you, in behalf "of Lord Croſslove." "In every thing "but that I will be guided by you," ſaid Louiſa; "but ſurely, Madam, you are not "ſerious."—"Serious! can you ſuppoſe "it? no my dear, I am too much intereſted "in ſeeing you Lady Belmont to become "an advocate for his brutal uncle; but "we muſt be prudent, and not give his "Lordſhip any umbrage, by receiving "his nephew with too great an appear-

"ance

" ance of ſatisfaction; but let me aſk you
" one queſtion, and let your anſwer be
" like yourſelf, ingenuous and ſincere:
" do you think you could be happy with
" Lord Belmont was he to become your
" huſband?" Louiſa, bluſhing as red as
ſcarlet, and heſitating, ſaid at laſt;
" Madam, you are entitled to know my
" moſt ſerious thoughts, and I ſcruple
" not to declare to you, that if on a far-
" ther acquaintance with him, he ſhould
" prove to be the ſame, both in morals,
" principles, and underſtanding, as his
" appearance beſpeaks him to be, I do in
" reality think, I could not be happy with
" any man elſe."—" Then, my dear,"
ſaid the Marchioneſs, " let me adviſe
" you—next Thurſday he intends wait-
" ing on you for his anſwer, do not keep
" him in ſuſpence ſince ſuch are your
" ſentiments for him, but tell him openly
" and freely you accept of his addreſſes,
" ſhould the inquiries the Marquis intends
" making with regard to him, anſwer
" the good opinion you have already re-

" ceived

"ceived of him." "Would not that be "rather too precipitate Madam," aſked "Louiſa.—"Not at all, my dear," replied ſhe; "noble minds ſcorn mean diſſi-"mulation"—"I abhor it—you are my "witneſs, Madam, and hope I ſhall ever "be ſincere in all my thoughts and ex-"preſſions: but you will be preſent at "the interview, which will relieve my "confuſion in the important converſa-"tion."—"Depend upon it, my dear, "I ſhall not leave you. Oh! Miſs Rivers, "I foreſee your future happineſs, which "anticipates my contentment and heart-"felt joy on the account of it."

The ladies then finiſhed dreſſing, and deſcended into the eating room, where Mr. de Polignac waited their coming. The Marquis was conſiderably recovered; no ſigns of deſpondency or melancholy on his countenance, and that day he looked remarkably well: but, alas, that viſible ſatisfaction proceeded from a moſt pernicious cauſe. He had that morning been at the gaming table, where, at firſt, he-

he intended to have been only an idle ſpectator—hazarded a ſtake with ſucceſs, a ſecond, third, fourth, and fifth, with equal advantage—allured by the hope of gain, and vainly flattering himſelf to retrieve his broken fortune, doubled and trippled his ſtakes, won all before him, and returned home with a conſiderable ſum of money; elated with his good fortune, all his former ardour for play returned, and he totally forgot the pious reſolution he had taken of never touching a card again; deluding himſelf with having fortitude of mind ſufficient, that if in caſe fortune again ſhould turn his enemy, to retreat before ſhe ſhould have entirely ſtripped him of his newly-acquired wealth. Thus determined, he had engaged himſelf to join his gambling friends the enſuing evening, where he hoped at leaſt to double the advantage he had gained; and buoyed up with this flattering ſhadow, it produced the lively animated looks ſo conſpicuous in his whole aſpect. The ladies complimented him

on this agreeable change, which he retaliated; and with reaſon, as they were both pleaſed with the reſolution taken with regard to Lord Belmont.

Dinner being over, and the viſiting hour arrived; Mr. de Polignac went to his deſtruction, and the ladies, to Madame de Cagliari, who had a card aſſembly, but limited her company not to exceed a decent moderate ſum; which was the more agreeable to all parties, as the greateſt loſs to every individual did not ſurpaſs twenty ſequins, ten guineas. Thus far it proved an amuſing paſtime—her hotel was therefore in general more crowded with genteel company than any in Florence.

The inſtant the Marchioneſs and Louiſa entered the drawing room, Lord Croſslove was near the door, and preſented his hand to the laſt, to conduct her to the upper end of the room where Madame de Cagliari was ſeated; while Lord Belmont, who his uncle had induced to go there, performed the ſame ceremony to

the

the Marchioneſs. Louiſa would fain have been excuſed to be thus conducted, but could not poſſibly avoid it; and Lord Croſslove was even bold enough to whiſper in her ear as he led her through the room, "We muſt be better acquainted than we "have been." Louiſa's anger and confuſion was but too viſible by the bluſhes which covered her face; not unobſerved by Lord Belmont, who caſt a moſt tender look at her as he bowed, which ſhe only could return by a timid civility.

During the whole evening Lord Croſslove watched his nephew's and Miſs Rivers' looks with ſuch attention, that they were totally deprived of all ocular intelligence with each other; yet, notwithſtanding, the uncle had read too much in his nephew's eyes to convince him he was his rival. Miſs Rivers, from a natural reſerve and baſhfulneſs, which generally accompanied her when ſhe found herſelf the object of admiration, he could not form a judgment of, ſo contented himſelf by keeping all other men at a diſtance

from

from her, and kept her in continual converſation, though all her replies to him conſiſted moſtly of monoſyllables.

The Marchioneſs was engaged at ombre, and Louiſa having ſtood all the time behind her chair, had thereby given her an opportunity of hearing the important diſcourſe of Lord Croſslove to her, and gueſſing at her diſtreſs, ſaid, in order to relieve her, "Suppoſe, my dear, as "our party is finiſhed, you and I ſhould "change places, I have played with ill "luck, perhaps yours may be better." Louiſa rejoicing to be thus releaſed from her talkative lover, accepted the propoſal with pleaſure, as her attention would now be required on her game.

A lady there, then diſengaged, challenged Lord Croſslove to a party at piquet; of which he immediately excuſed himſelf, as not being in a playing humour; "But, Madam," added he, "my "nephew will be glad of the honour of "loſing a little money with you, though "he is a famous piquet player, I can tell

"you

" you that"—and without waiting her reply, " here George," ſaid he to him, " give this lady a ſpecimen of your " ſkill, or elſe take a leſſon from her."

Lord Belmont bit his lips through vexation, as he had entertained hopes of a little converſation with Madame de Polignac, which were now cruelly fruſtrated by the imperious commands of his uncle, and which, out of politeneſs to the lady in queſtion, he could not but obey.

Madame de Polignac was likewiſe much diſpleaſed at the malignant ſcheme of Lord Croſslove, who had thus defeated her intentions of a moment's converſation with his nephew; and being tired with the idle chit chat of the former, went to be a ſpectator of the latter's ſucceſs at piquet, being in no fear for Louiſa, who had not a word to ſpare to any one, but what related to her game. Scarce was ſhe arrived at Lord Belmont's table, before Lord Croſslove joined her, thereby preventing all poſſible opportuni-

ty

ty of exchanging one word together. Her prudence, however, forbade her to take the leaſt notice of this perſecution; but, on the contrary, ſhe appeared unconcerned, and converſed with the perſecutor till the party was finiſhed, the lady having found her adverſary too hard for her, declined playing any more. Louiſa had likewiſe riſen from her chair, and the party engaging at vingt-un, the Marchioneſs immediately joined her and propoſed their return homeward, which ſhe gladly accepted. Lord Croſslove again ready with his hand to reconduct her to her carriage, which ſhe was conſtrained to accept of; but all the vigilance he had kept up during the courſe of the evening, could not prevent Lord Belmont's giving his hand to the Marchioneſs, who he conducted to her coach, though cloſely followed by his uncle. A trifling accident here favoured the Marchioneſs's deſign. As Lord Croſslove was intent to the few words which paſſed

paſſed between them, and which were of no conſequence, he rather hurried Louiſa, who coming through the anti-chamber, the trimming of her petticoat caught the corner of one of the orange trees, which decorated that room, and was entangled in its branches. Impatient as her conductor was to follow the Marchioneſs, he was forced to ſtay till Miſs Rivers was diſengaged from the impediment which retarded her, giving thereby Lord Belmont an opportunity of aſking whether he might hope for a favourable anſwer from the object of his heart, and the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of receiving for anſwer, that he might with all aſſurance, as Miſs Rivers had confeſſed her eſteem for him to her, and had refuſed peremptorily his uncle's offer: "But," added ſhe, "leave me this moment for fear of "ſuſpicion, and pray ſee what occaſions "their delay in coming." Lord Belmont ſoon met his uncle and Miſs Rivers, and addreſſing himſelf to the latter, ſaid,

"Madame

"Madame de Polignac would hardly "permit me to aſſiſt her getting into her "carriage, as ſhe did not ſee you near "her." Louiſa explained the reaſon, and Lord Croſslove happy in the thought that no converſation could have paſſed between them in the ſpace of a minute or two, ſaid with a malicious ſmile, "Madame was uneaſy with the appre- "henſions of my running away with her "niece, and you ſeem diſpleaſed at not "having had a *tête-a-tête* with her aunt; "but I ſhall watch you." This he ſaid in Engliſh, and was perfectly well underſtood by Louiſa, who ſtepped into the coach, and was, with the Marchioneſs, ſoon at their hotel.

Being arrived at their apartment, they both broke out into mutual complaints againſt Lord Croſslove, at his uncivil manner, his impolite behaviour and his tyrannical arbitrary way of treating his nephew, whom both ladies pitied.

The Marchioneſs obſerved to Louiſa, that ſhe greatly feared Lord Croſslove ſuſpected

ſuſpected his nephew's affection for her. "I am of your opinion, Madam," anſwered ſhe, "and ſhould not at all be "ſurpriſed if he ſhould forbid Lord Bel-"mont's ever paying any viſit here, "from his expreſſion that he would "watch him."——"I conjecture worſe "from his whole behaviour," ſaid the Marchioneſs; "for I am much miſtaken "if he does not inſiſt upon his quitting "Florence, at leaſt till ſuch time as he "can conquer your averſion for him." "Then," ſaid Louiſa, "he muſt be an "exile for ever; for though it is incon-"ſiſtent with my way of thinking, to "hate any body, yet it is impoſſible I "can ever be reconciled to Lord Croſs-"love, that is, not in that point he "wiſhes I ſhould; for I had rather beg "my bread than become his wife; "and ſorry I am, he exhibits ſuch a bad "ſpecimen of his countrymen, only as "his nephew is ſuch a ſtriking contraſt "to the uncle, it induces me to wiſh the

" latter is ſingular, and that all other " Engliſhmen reſemble the former."— " It were to be wiſhed indeed, my dear," ſaid the Marchioneſs. " I apprehend " alſo, that the amiable Belmont will " not have it in his power to come to his " appointment the day after to-morrow, " his uncle will keep him from hence " depend upon it."—" I would have " him obey his uncle," anſwered Louiſa, " as he is his uncle. Obedience never " yet proved prejudicial in a good cauſe. " As he is ſtill in Lord Croſslove's pow- " er, he ought to reſpect that power, " and with the more reaſon, as there " is but a ſhort period remaining, when " that power and authority will be anni- " hilated."

Supper being ſerved up, and Mr. de Polignac not returned, the ladies partook of it *tête-a-tête*, and after a little more chit chat, they retired to reſt.

Mr. de Polignac did not reach his hotel till five o'clock in the morning, he had been engaged till that hour with cards,

cards, and had met with ſuch amazing ſucceſs, that he repented he had ſo long withſtood the joining his favourite amuſement. As he had promiſed the ladies to attend them, with ſome more company, that morning, to the gallery of pictures, and finding he ſhould be unable to perform his promiſe, and ever attentive to his wife, he wrote a note excuſing himſelf for non-attendance, and begged ſhe would not be diſappointed, but viſit without him that muſeum of arts. The company appointed to go with her and Miſs Rivers was numerous, ſufficient not to make it appear ſingular, eſpecially as it conſiſted of gentlemen and ladies. The fact was, that this infatuated man had given his word of honour to meet his gambling companions as ſoon as he ſhould have breakfaſted; for, being ſuch a conſiderable gainer, the etiquette required that the loſers ſhould have their chance of revenge.

Madame de Polignac having found the note, and underſtanding from the ſervant

the Marquis was very well, ſhe aſked no farther queſtions, always happy when he was pleaſed, no jealouſy whatever tortured her gentle mind, all was calm there.

Her company being arrived, Louiſa and herſelf attended them to that moſt famous gallery, deſervedly diſtinguiſhed in Europe by the name of the Florence gallery. Our ladies were highly entertained, particularly Miſs Rivers, who was herſelf a moſt excellent artiſt. A lady there, not one of Madame de Polignac's party, expreſſed her ſurpriſe to a gentleman at not ſeeing Lord Belmont amongſt them, as he is a lover of arts, and has a great veneration for this repoſitory of ſkill and genius, which he ſeldom fails viſiting every morning. "Lord "Belmont," replied the gentleman, "that univerſal favourite of the ladies, "has left Florence this morning. I "called upon him, and was informed by "a ſervant, that he ſet out about nine "o'clock,

" o'clock, accompanied by his uncle;
" but where they intended directing
" their ſteps, or how long they were to
" be abſent, I could not gain the moſt
" minute intelligence, the man appear-
" ing to be perfectly ignorant relating to
" it."—" I dare ſay," replied another,
" that ſurly Lord Croſslove, jealous of
" the preference his nephew meets with
" every where, will not ſuffer ſo for-
" midable a rival to breathe the ſame air
" with himſelf." The converſation now became general upon this ſubject. Some blamed Lord Belmont for being too ſubſervient, in not ſhaking off the yoke which galled him. Others commended his forbearance under his circumſtances; for, if he aſſumed a right of maſterſhip before the ſtipulated time, that noble fortune of his devolved to his brute of an uncle.——" And, inſtead of fourteen
" months," ſaid another, " I would ſuf-
" fer fourteen years ſlavery rather than
" that hunks ſhould finger a farthing of

" it, he has too much already, which fills " him with that arrogance and pride, for " which alone he is remarkable." In ſhort, the whole group condemned and ſentenced Lord Croſslove, and rehearſed the amiable virtues of Lord Belmont, the Marchioneſs and Louiſa excepted, who prudently remained ſilent auditors to their general and univerſal opinions. The hour for the toilette drawing near, the company diſperſed, and each returned to their reſpective hotel, or palace, as the houſes of the great are called in Italy.

Madame de Polignac and Louiſa converſed during their returning home, entirely on Lord Belmont's ſubject; but neither were ſurpriſed at the ſuppoſed ſtep Lord Croſslove had taken, judging from his behaviour the evening before, at Madame de Cagliari's, what would have been the enſuing conſequence, and both depended firmly on being informed the day following by a letter from Lord Belmont himſelf, the true reaſon of this tranſaction.

Arriving

Arriving at home, the Marquis de Polignac was ready to ſtep into his carriage, but had waited the ladies' return to pay his reſpects to them before he went to dine with his friend, as he ſaid. His lady ſeeing him look ſo well and ſo chearful, ſaid, "I am under infinite obligations to "your friend for having thus contributed "to the remarkable change ſo viſible in "your countenance, which gives me in-"finite delight."—"My dear Marchio-"neſs," replied he, tenderly kiſſing her hand, "it is to the return of my health, "effected by your affectionate care, and "to Miſs Rivers' attention to amuſe me "during my indiſpoſition, that the "chearfulneſs in my aſpect is entirely "owing. Not one friend in the world "can, or ſhall rob my amiable phyſicians "of the merit or praiſes you both ſo "richly deſerve." The ladies bowed thanks, and the Marquis having embraced his lady, ſaid on leaving the room, "I'll endeavour to ſup with you this "evening."

After dinner, when the ladies were entertaining each other with muſic and ſinging, the groom of the chamber preſented Miſs Rivers with a note, for it could not be called a letter from its ſize; its outſide was much ſoiled, which was accounted for by its having been in the pocket of the poſtillion who delivered it, and had withdrawn immediately.

On looking at the ſuperſcription, as if to reconnoitre the hand writing, found it was addreſſed with pencil inſtead of ink: and aſked the groom whether the bearer was not an object of charity. "I "really think ſo, Madam," ſaid he; "he "looked miſerably poor, ſpoke French, "and went away immediately.

On the groom's leaving the apartment, Louiſa opened the note, and to her great amazement, read the following words written diſtinctly in pencil:

"Compelled by my too cruel uncle "(without any previous notice till the in-"ſtant the chaiſe arrived) to accompany "him;

" him; but I know not where; deprived
" of pen, ink, and paper, continually
" watched by him, I am ordered to con-
" ſider you as my future aunt: Heaven,
" and your goodneſs, avert the dreadful
" thought. May I hope, Madam, the
" favourable opinion Madame de Polig-
" nac kindly imparted your having con-
" ceived of me, may continue towards an
" unfortunate being, whoſe happineſs
" lies in your breaſt, and who muſt be
" miſerable, ever miſerable, till aſſured
" he will in a few months time be bleſ-
" ſed with your hand and call you his?

" I write this in a garden at Bologna,
" accompanied by my uncle, who reduces
" me to the miſerable reſource of deceit,
" by pretending I mark the names of
" planets; I hope the poſtillion may be
" truſted. My reſpects attend the Mar-
" chioneſs; need I entreat her influence?
" No, I am ſure of her benignity. Oh,
" Mademoiſelle, I dread, I fear, but why?
" your angel looks cannot deceive; and

" dare I utter, when I flatter myſelf I was
" not entirely indifferent to you when I
" laſt had the honour of kiſſing your
" hand?—tranſporting thought! But oh,
" my Argus approaches.

" Eternally your's.

" BELMONT."

" He has left me unſuſpected; but
" cannot learn the place of my deſtiny.
" Deteſtable fate, torturing exile."

Louiſa, after having peruſed this lamentable note, delivered it to the Marchioneſs with eyes filled with tears; for certain it was, Lord Belmont had made a great impreſſion on her mind, which ſhe did not ſcruple to own to the Marchioneſs, who, in returning her the paper, was equally affected with her friend; but, however, conſoled and condoled with her by drawing the proſpect of his happineſs nigh, when he would aſſert his right, and in defiance of his froward uncle, put an end to his own ſufferings, by publicly, and in the face of God and man, claiming

you

you as his wife. Miſs Rivers had too good an underſtanding, and her ſentiments were too rational to give way to an unbecoming permanent melancholy; but as her diſpoſition was of the mildeſt and moſt delicate kind, feeling pain for the miſery or misfortune of every unhappy individual, no wonder Lord Belmont's baniſhment gave her great uneaſineſs, as a man for whom ſhe had an unfeigned eſteem, and the firſt who ever had inſpired her with ſentiments of a more refined nature than either eſteem or reſpect could claim. No wonder then, that her natural chearfulneſs became rather leſs lively; but, alas, other heavy calamities which ſoon befel her and her amiable friend, baniſhed for a conſiderable time all acceſs of joy from her heart, and made her compleatly miſerable—but of this hereafter.

The ladies tried in vain to cheer their ſpirits with muſic. The inſtruments appeared to be out of tune, and their voices refuſed their melody. A walk in the gar-

den

den was then propoſed, but not with any better effect. Reading was ſtill leſs agreeable, and they found at laſt, that chatting with each other about various ſubjects proved the moſt pleaſing.

As Mr. de Poligniac had partly promiſed to ſup with the ladies, the Marchioneſs had given orders to retard that meal an hour, unwilling her huſband (if detained) ſhould come in towards the latter part of it; but the time being conſiderably elapſed, ſhe ſat down with Miſs Rivers, who, as well as herſelf, was rather more ſprightly. They talked of Lord Belmont, drank to his health, and formed plans, ſchemes, and projects, which, although they never intended to execute, it furniſhed them with mirth and lively converſation. As neither were inclined to retire to reſt, they reſolved to ſit up and wait the return of the Marquis, whom they thought would be much flattered by this mark of attention. And here we ſhall leave theſe amiable friends enjoying for a while the

pleaſures

pleaſures of innocent ſallies, and take a view of this unhappy man.

I have already obſerved he went to dine with what he had thought a friend, but in fact he proved a fiend: for though his outward appearance beſpoke him a man of rank and fortune, to which the title of Count added a greater luſtre, yet in reality, he was a moſt notorious ſharper, whoſe grandeur and magnificence had no other ſupport than what the cheating and the fleecing of the unwary procured him—He had, beſides, ſeveral aſſociates in iniquity; who, like himſelf, appeared to be, and were ſtiled, men of faſhion; yet were, like him, upheld by gaming —and ſeeing that all the fineſſe and arts practiſed by theſe peſts of ſociety proved no bar to the Marquis' ſucceſs, they reſolved to be leſs cautious, as they knew their adverſary to be a man of honour, who would not ſuſpect them, and in conſequence of that confidence, made uſe of ſuch palpable deceits as ſtripped the unfor-

fortunate Marquis of near all he had gained the preceding day. Enraged at his ill luck, he watched his companions narrowly, greatly ſuſpecting foul play, and was ſoon convinced he did not err, of which he gave thoſe harpies many a gentle hint, by objecting playing with ſeveral whom he ſecretly had detected, in the which he was indulged, which confirmed him the more his opinion was right. Fortune now began to waver; ſometimes he won; till at laſt, almoſt diſtracted with ill luck, and certain he was tricked, he loſt at one ſtake the whole of what he had brought thither, which amounted to near ſix thouſand pounds. Enraged to madneſs, he accuſed his deteſtable conqueror of falſe play; who, in endeavouring to exculpate himſelf, moved his hand and arm with too ſwift a motion, which occaſioned three cards, which he had ſeparated from the pack to ſecure his victory againſt the Marquis, who, without that ſecretion, would infallibly have been the winner, to drop

out of his boſom, and ſtood at once convicted of falſehood and theft.

The Marquis, almoſt choaked with paſſion at finding himſelf duped, inſtantly ſeized the impoſtor by the throat, in order to cane him unmercifully, when at the inſtant, ſeveral ſwords were drawn, and nothing but confuſion and incoherent noiſe was heard; till at laſt the confidants of the atrocious deceiver inſiſted upon ſingle combat between the Marquis and his adverſary, for whoſe honour they all were vindicators, notwithſtanding the glaring proof to the contrary.

The honeſt part of the company uſed their utmoſt efforts to diſſuade the Marquis not to engage with ſuch villains, as they now had manifeſtly proved themſelves to be: but that unfortunate man, liſtening to neither reaſon nor advice, but collaring the atrocious gambler, and dragging him from the reſt, bid him draw and confeſs himſelf a villain before he breathed his laſt. The other, ſure of

be-

being ſeconded by ſome of his crew, for guilt had made him fear, and although the Marquis' friends had inſiſted but one of each party ſhould be witneſſes of the duel; yet notwithſtanding the villain, true to his hopes, was aſſiſted by his aſſociates, which emboldened him to draw likewiſe, and both preparing to ruſh into eternal deſtruction with all the load of guilt on their heads, when the abandoned wretches ſeeing their leader unable to ſupport the fight, daſtardly and inhumanly ſtabbed the Marquis on every ſide, who fell weltring in his blood.

The noiſe, the claſhing of ſwords, the imprecations of the murderers who inſtantly fled, after having ſecured their ill-gotten gain, part of which had been left upon the gaming table, and the alarm which both the real and ſuppoſed friends of the Marquis made on ſeeing the precipitate flight of the aſſaſſins, whom they in vain attempted to detain, through want of ſufficient hands to aſſiſt them, ſoon brought a number of people into the inner court, where

where the ſcene of ſlaughter had been, as likewiſe ſeveral ſervants who had waited their maſters' orders in the outer court; among whom were the miſerable Marquis' own domeſtics; who, ſeeing their worthy maſter to all appearance dead, ſhewed all the tokens of unfeigned ſorrow and affliction. They engaged all the ſpectators to aſſiſt them, and by the help of the light of their flambeaux bound up the wounds where life ſeemed to iſſue from with precipitation, whilſt ſome ran for a ſurgeon, and others for a litter to convey the dying victim to his palace.

In this ſituation he was conducted home, about one oclock in the morning, without any ſigns of life; and at the ſame time when the amiable Marchioneſs and Miſs Rivers were chatting together and waited his return—but being alarmed by an uncommon and confuſed noiſe which proceeded from the inner court, they both ran into the veſtibule, the windows of which looked that way, they ſoon beheld

the

the diſtreſſing ſcene—the Marquis ſtretched on a litter, pale as death, and covered with blood.

Madame de Polignac gave a violent ſcream and dropped ſenſeleſs on the floor; Louiſa being almoſt in a ſimilar ſituation, yet her love for her friend animating her ſtrength and courage, flew to her aſſiſtance, but in vain—having no ſmelling bottle of any kind about her, and not daring to leave her, kept chafing her temples with one hand, whilſt with the other ſhe tried to open the fingers which were cloſed in the hand, watering them and the lovely death-ſtruck face with tears; but all proved fruitleſs.

Her ſcreams and cries brought at laſt aſſiſtance; and a well-looking young gentleman entering, ſaid, "The cries of "diſtreſs have brought me hither— "Wherein, Madam, can I be of ſervice to "you?" ſtarting at the ſame time at her uncommon beauty, and at the object of her affliction.—"Whoever you are, Sir," "ſaid Louiſa, "be my guardian angel,

"and

" and aſſiſt me to convey this bleſſed ſaint " to her apartment, or call her women to " help me."—" The lady lives and " breathes," ſaid Mr. Meanwell, (that being the young man's name) " and do " not, my dear lady, be too much alarm- " ed; ſhe is in a ſwoon, out of which ſhe " will ſoon awake." And taking out of his pocket a ſmall bottle of ſalts and hartſ-horn, and having applied it properly, ſoon recalled the wandering ſpirits of the afflicted mourner: who looking about her, and ſeeing her faithful Louiſa on the one ſide of her, and a ſtranger on the other, both employed in relieving her, thanked them both, and inquiring for her deceaſed lord, entreating to be conducted to him. " The Marquis is not dead, " Madam," replied Mr. Meanwell, " and, " I hope, is in no danger—loſs of blood " made him faint, but he hath opened his " eyes, and hath ſpoken." " Bleſſed be " the tongue that utters ſuch conſoling " tidings," ſaid the Marchioneſs: " pray,

" Sir,

"Sir, lead me to him, and let my eyes "be a witneſs to my new-born happi- "neſs."—"If I might take the liberty to "adviſe you, Madam," ſaid Mr. Mean- well, "you had better defer your viſiting "the Marquis till to-morrow; the ſight "of you in his debilitated ſtate would "prove prejudicial to him; as he is to be "kept very quiet, it would only diſtreſs "him the more."—"Diſtreſs him!" re- plied the Marchioneſs, "it would diſtract "him—you are right, Sir; I muſt not "ſee him to-night—Heaven grant me "patience till to-morrow I hope."— "Would not you rather go into your own "apartment, Madam?" ſaid Louiſa, whoſe arms ſupported her friend's head as they were ſitting on the ground. "I will, "my dear," replied ſhe, "and this gen- "tleman ſhall go with us— he looks like "a friend, and in our diſtreſs a friend is "comfort."

Mr. Meanwell then aſſiſted the ladies in riſing; and having reſpectfully pre-

ſented

ſented his arm to the Marchioneſs, who on the other ſide leaned upon Louiſa, and at length brought her into her dreſſing-room, where, ſeated on the ſopha, ſhe begged Miſs Rivers to call her women, who inſtantly appeared; but could give their lady no other information about the Marquis, than that he lived. She then ordered a ſervant to inquire, and to deſire the ſurgeon to come up to her as ſoon as poſſible. Her maid ſoon returned, and informed her, her Lord was got in bed, and that the ſurgeon would wait on her in a few minutes. Then, turning to Mr. Meanwell, "Pray, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "will "you inform me how this dreadful acci-"dent has happened?"—"As far as I "am able I will, Madam," anſwered he: "but I much fear it cannot add to "your ſatisfaction."—"It cannot be "worſe," ſaid the Marchioneſs, "than "what I am already acquainted with; "my dear Lord is in a dying ſtate: Can "aught elſe but his death ſurpaſs that

"heart-

" heart-breaking idea? Scruple not then,
" I beg, to acquaint me with every cir-
" cumſtance within your knowledge.
" My ideas are bewildered, and my afflic-
" tions are augmented by endeavouring
" to find out the cauſe of this calamity."

Mr. Meanwell then informed her, that being but lately arrived in Florence, he lodged with Mr. Pharmace, the ſurgeon then in the houſe; and having ſupped together, were preparing to retire, when they were prevented by a violent rapping at the door, accompanied by ſeveral voices entreating Mr. Pharmace to follow them immediately to the palace of the Count Birbanti, to aſſiſt a wounded gentleman; with which he immediately complied. That he himſelf went with him, in caſe he could be of any ſervice. That they found the Marquis wounded, and in a ſwoon. That the ſurgeon gave him all poſſible aſſiſtance; and endeavoured to get him into the palace, where he could more conveniently both examine and

dreſs

dreſs his wounds. That the report was, the Marquis had dined and ſpent the evening at Count Birbanti's, who, though he paſſed for a nobleman, was ſtrongly ſuſpected to be a notorious ſharper, who kept a gambling houſe; and which was now confirmed by his being fled. That ſome of the ſervants ſuppoſed a quarrel at play had occaſioned the duel; which he truſted would not however prove fatal to the Marquis. That he had accompanied Mr. Pharmace into the hotel, where he waited in the antichamber, in hopes of hearing a favourable account of the Marquis, till the diſtreſsful cries of the lady procured him the honour of coming to her aſſiſtance.

"My ſincere thanks, and thoſe of my "friend here, are your recompence, Sir," ſaid the Marchioneſs. "But oh, my "Louiſa! my dear Lord never played "but to amuſe himſelf, and like a gen-"tleman. And is this that Count Bir-"banti, that ſuppoſed friend I held myſelf

"ſo

" ſo much obliged to for the reſtoration " of my Lord's health? Deluded, miſe- " rable woman!" " Don't deſpair, Ma- " dam," ſaid Louiſa; " be comforted; " the Marquis, I hope, is in no danger: " this gentleman ſuppoſes he will do " very well; and the ſurgeon I hope will " confirm the happy ſuppoſition." The Marchioneſs ſighed, and remained ſilent; then deſired Miſs Rivers to ſend an expreſs off to her brother, Mr. de Bonfoi, who was then at Bologna, in his way to Florence, requeſting his immediate appearance there; which was inſtantly put in execution. The ſurgeon then having demanded permiſſion to ſee the Marchioneſs, was immediately admitted. From his looks the unfortunate lady preſaged no conſolatory hope. In reality there were no hopes left. The Marquis being mortally wounded, he endeavoured to ſoften the melancholy tidings as much as poſſible, entreating her not to viſit her Lord, but begged her to retire to reſt, and

endeavour

endeavour to obtain a little ſleep, which would enable her the following morning to appear more compoſed before the Marquis.—To this laſt requeſt of the ſurgeon ſhe could not conſent, although ſhe granted the former; and in her turn deſired him to remain all night in her Lord's chamber, together with the phyſician. And ſhe begged Mr. Meanwell would keep her and Miſs Rivers company; to which he readily aſſented, having previouſly requeſted Mr. Pharmace would ſend to inform his ſiſter of it, leſt ſhe ſhould be uneaſy at his abſence. The night proved long and diſmal, though it was then near three o'clock.

Mr. Meanwell did all in his power to divert Madame de Polignac's ideas from the unhappy accident; and ſhe having expreſſed a deſire to know who he was, and of what country, as his accent beſpoke him a foreigner, he acquainted her he was an Engliſhman, a clergyman, and the ſon of a clergyman in London. That

having as yet no preferment, he had accepted the propoſal of a nobleman to accompany him and his family into Italy, as preceptor to one of his ſons, then about ſeventeen years of age. That the Counteſs, who, with her two daughters, intended to be of the party, being well acquainted with his family, requeſted his ſiſter, who was the widow of a near relation, a clergyman, and likewiſe of the ſame name of Meanwell, to accompany her during their excurſion, as a companion to herſelf, and (as ſhe expreſſed it) to keep the girls within bounds. As my ſiſter, continued Mr. Meanwell, had no children living, ſhe readily agreed to go, having a ſtrong deſire to ſee Italy. That they had been ſcarcely three weeks from home, when his ſiſter and himſelf found it impoſſible to proceed any farther with them, from the continual broils and quarrels among themſelves; the ſons and daughters having been ſpoiled by a miſtaken indulgence, and were more apt to

aſſume

aſſume authority than their parents themſelves, who, on their ſide, were never of the ſame opinion. That the contempt and even inſolence with which at times the young people would treat him and his ſiſter, when they remonſtrated to them upon the impropriety of their conduct, was beyond bearing; nor was there a poſſibility of any redreſs: for whenever either of them lodged a complaint againſt any of the young gentlemen or ladies, the parents, in oppoſition to each other, would alternately ſcreen the accuſed party. That when at Leghorn, he found out that a very improper connection was forming between the heir of the family and ſome abandoned wretches; and warning him againſt it to no purpoſe, he was determined to quit them, after informing the Earl of the alarming ſituation of his ſon. That his ſiſter had an inclination to ſee Florence, and heartily tired of the noble family, had accompanied him thither, where they intended to

paſs a month, and then return to their native country.

The ladies thanked Mr. Meanwell for his narration; and the Marchioneſs, ſighing, ſaid, "It hath been my dear Lord's "fate to fall into the hands of ſuch "wretches as you endeavoured to re-"deem your pupil from. Unthinking "and imprudent parents!—You, Sir, "have fulfill'd your duty."

The morning being now pretty far advanced, the ſurgeon came to acquaint Madame de Polignac, that the Marquis had that moment inquired after her; and underſtanding ſhe had been up all night, begged, for his ſake, ſhe would go to bed, as his fear of her injuring her own health added greatly to the miſery of his not being able to ſee her. "I will obey him "this inſtant," replied ſhe; "and oh "that ſleep would befriend me! but that "I fear. Come, my Louiſa, let one bed "hold us both. You, Sir," ſaid ſhe to Mr. Meanwell, "ſtand in need of reſt too. "But let me ſee you in the morning."

The

The unfortunate Marquis, ſenſible he could not recover, expreſſed a deſire to ſee his lady's brother, Mr. de Bonfoi; and being informed an expreſs had been ſent off for that purpoſe, he ſeemed much more eaſy: and the inſtant he arrived he was, by the Marquis's orders, conducted to the bed-ſide, and was by him informed of the deplorable ſituation he was in, with regard to his worldly affairs, and the deſtructive practice which had occaſioned it. He likewiſe gave him an account of the duel, which would put an end to his life; but begged no vengeance might be taken of the murderers, but to leave them to the divine wrath and their own conſcience. That he himſelf was the moſt to blame in purſuing the deteſtable vice of gaming, and even with thoſe he ſuſpected of fraud. That in his bureau he would find a journal, wherein he had put down every tranſaction, with regard to his creditors, who held his eſtate; and begged he would

be his executor, and take care of his beloved unfortunate wife, who now muſt be a beggar.

As he was exceedingly weak, but perfectly in his ſenſes, he was near half an hour in making the above confeſſion to his brother-in-law, who promiſed to fulfil every thing he deſired. After ſome pauſe the dying man cried out, "Do ſomething "for Miſs Rivers, for her own, and for "my dear wife's ſake." And then deſired a clergyman to pray by him; after which he aſked to ſee the Marchioneſs and her friend.—Thoſe truly diſtreſſed ladies had not cloſed an eye, though they had been near three hours on the bed. Madame de Polignac, knowing of her brother's arrival, had riſen to receive him; but being informed he was with her Lord, patiently waited his coming to her; and he himſelf came to acquaint her the Marquis wiſhed to ſee her. She roſe inſtantly, followed by Louiſa; and having ſilently entered the room, and approached

proached the bed-ſide, ſhe beheld her dying huſband, in an infinitely worſe ſituation than even her moſt diſtreſſed imagination had painted him to her. The Marquis looked at her, and, with what ſtrength he had left, took her hand, and preſſing it to his lips, ſaid, with a broken voice, "Of Heaven, and you, fair excel-"lence, I aſk forgiveneſs. Can you em-"brace a deluded man who has ruined "you?"—"Forgive you what? My "lord, my love, my dying huſband!" ſaid ſhe, falling on his neck and kiſſing his dying lips. "You ever have been "my heart's wiſh, my bliſs here on "earth."—"Then I die contented," ſaid he. "Farewell, thou pattern of all vir-"tues, thou moſt amiable of wives!" and inſtantly expired.

The diſconſolate Marchioneſs, finding his ſoul was fled, ſunk down in a ſwoon upon the lifeleſs body, from whence ſhe was carried up and laid in her bed, where all imaginable care was taken to recover

her; but to no effect, though ſhe breath-ed. Full two hours did ſhe remain in this deplorable ſtate, attended by the almoſt lifeleſs Louiſa, her brother, the phyſician and ſurgeon. She awaked at laſt out of this death-like lethargy; but oh, ye powers! what a heart-rending ſpectacle did ſhe preſent to her friends who ſtood mourning by her bed-ſide; her eye-balls rolled in her head, ſhe bit her lips, wrung her hands, her ſenſes were loſt, her rea-ſon gone, and ſhe was raving mad. But here let me draw a curtain over this too afflicting ſcene. Suffice it to ſay, that for four and twenty hours ſhe had not the leaſt interval of reaſon, till a quarter of an hour before her death; her lips ſeem-ed to move as if ſhe prayed; then look-ing round her with a placid and ſerene countenance, ſaid to her faithful Louiſa, who had never left her, "My dear, the "cup is full, and all is over with me. I "go to meet my dear Lord. Be good, "be happy—Fly this pernicious ſpot,

"and

" and go to England. One more embrace,
" my deareſt friend, and farewell for
" ever." Then calling her brother to her, who was drowned in tears, ſhe ſaid to him, " To you I recommend this dear-
" eſt child; be a friend, be a father to
" her, and Heaven's bleſſing will guide
" you both. Once more farewell." And immediately cloſed her eyes for ever.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the agonies of the deeply diſtreſſed Louiſa at this mournful cataſtrophe of her revered friend; ſhe hung over the lifeleſs body, and kiſſed thoſe pale, clay-cold lips, as if ſhe meant to recall that ſpirit back which but ſo lately had left its manſion: nor did any of the ſpectators dare to interrupt her in thoſe laſt offices of unfeigned love and heart-felt friendſhip. All reſpected her grief, and were ſuffocated with tears, while her ſorrow, ſilent and majeſtic, pierced the heart of every one. No tear dropped from her eyes; thoſe fountains, adminiſtrators of relief, were

ſtopped. No ſigh was heard to eſcape her. Her countenance was fixed upon her amiable deceaſed friend, where ſhe would have gazed till her heart-ſtrings had been broken, had not the phyſician been alarmed, fearing an alienation of reaſon, though in a more compoſed appearance, and entreated Mr. de Bonfoi to endeavour to have Miſs Rivers removed from that afflicting, oppreſſive ſight. Mr. de Bonfoi, in the moſt mild and ſoothing accents, begged of her to leave this ſcene of miſery, and follow him into her own apartment. The phyſician, ſurgeon, and the women who had attended, all joined in his entreaties, and prevailed with her; but before ſhe gave her hand to Mr. Bonfoi, who had preſented his, ſhe begged, in the moſt plaintive and gentle terms, to be permitted to ſee her deceaſed friend every day, till the time ſhe ſhould be depoſited in the ſame grave with the unfortunate Marquis, which was granted her. She then followed the gentlemen, and at

their

their requeſt, when in her own room, took ſome chicken broth which had been prepared for her, and ſhewed in all her actions perfect ſenſe and a ſound underſtanding.

Mr. Meanwell, who had been every day at the Palace, but had not been admitted, as may well be ſuppoſed, not thinking Miſs Rivers was in the apartment, begged to ſpeak with Mr. Pharmace, but on ſeeing her, was for withdrawing, when ſhe politely bid him come in, and ſhaking her head, ſaid, "Ah, "Mr. Meanwell, you once gladdened "my heart by the revival of my friend; "would to Heaven that could be the caſe "now." Mr. Meanwell bowed, but made no reply; and Mr. de Bonfoi coming up to him, ſaid, "I think, Sir, your "ſiſter would be of infinite ſervice to "that young lady, was ſhe here;" and turning to Louiſa, added, "I knew both "her and this lady when at Bologna, and "am certain you will find her a true-

"friend,

" friend, to condole with you and ſooth
" your melancholy. You want a female
" companion, and none ſo proper as
" Mrs. Meanwell." At the word friend, Louiſa ſighed bitterly, and ſaid, " The
" wretched have no friend—can any one
" be more completely wretched than I
" am at this preſent time? Why ſhould
" I diſturb and embitter the peaceful
" hours of Mrs. Meanwell, by the repe-
" tition of my ſorrows?" Mr. Meanwell then aſſured her that his ſiſter would be happy if ſhe could in any way alleviate her ſufferings, that ſhe had an heart formed for tenderneſs, and had, in all ſimilar caſes, ever exerted her utmoſt power to aſſuage and comfort the afflicted, and frequently with ſucceſs. Louiſa then conſented ſhe ſhould be ſent for, and found her in a very few days in reality ſuch as the gentleman had repreſented her, a truly virtuous and ſincere affectionate companion. As it is much more eaſy to conceive the heart-felt grief

of

of Miſs Rivers, than my pen is able to deſcribe, ſuffice it to ſay, that after proper reſt and nouriſhment, her health was pretty well re-eſtabliſhed. Her profound melancholy required time to be removed.

Mr. de Bonfoi having taken care to order the unfortunate deceaſed couple to be laid in one grave; and, according to the Marquis' requeſt, made no enquiry about the murderers, he then looked into the Marquis' affairs, which he found in a moſt deſperate ſituation, the ſettling of which required his preſence in Paris; and having adjuſted all things in Florence relating to the deceaſed, nothing remained but the fixing of Miſs Rivers wherever her inclinations ſhould lead her.

During thoſe tranſactions, Miſs Rivers and Mrs. Meanwell had contracted a ſtrict friendſhip with each other; the ſimilarity in their diſpoſitions, love of virtue, ſincerity, and goodneſs of heart rendered them in a manner inſeparable; what added more to this tye of friendſhip was,

Louiſa

Louiſa having underſtood from both Mr. and Mrs. Meanwell, that Earl Rivers and his family were the noble perſonages they had accompanied into Italy. This occaſioned her to diſcover to them who ſhe was, as likewiſe to give them a more particular account relating to herſelf, and in what manner ſhe had been educated, and earneſtly to ſolicit Mrs. Meanwell to ſay what plan ſhe ought to purſue. The lady no ſooner underſtood that ſhe was Captain Rivers' daughter (whom ſhe had known when in London) than ſhe embraced her, and weeping over her with a motherly affection, ſaid, "if you will "honour my humble roof with your "company, my houſe and all that is in "it, ſhall be at your ſervice. My fa- "ther, my brother, and myſelf, with "proper ſervants, compoſe my whole fa- "mily. My mother hath long ſince "been dead, and ſince I loſt my poor "huſband, I live retired with my father; "where, although we live not in the

"manner

" manner and ſtile you have been accuſ-
" tomed to, yet peace and contentment
" are our companions; ſomething more
" than the bare neceſſaries of life makes
" us comfortable: a few, but ſelect
" friends, form our ſociety; we viſit
" and receive viſits, when we pleaſe,
" and alternately enjoy ſolitude, and
" our hours glide away undiſturbed by
" diſcord, and unruffled by ambition."
Miſs Rivers thanked her with an unfeigned ſincerity; but being as yet undetermined with regard to her future way of living, ſhe neither accepted or declined the gracious offer. Mr. Meanwell was aſtoniſhed beyond meaſure, on finding the lady he ſo much admired was a native of Great Britain, and niece to Earl Rivers. This laſt circumſtance, however, gave him pain, as he had conceived a very ſtrong affection for Louiſa, (and, alas, who could ſee and not love her?) and although he had never dared to flatter himſelf with any hopes, till time, and

a longer

a longer acquaintance with each other, might have encouraged the flattering idea; but being now informed of her birth and quality, he grew penſive and melancholy; however, he hid his chagrin as much as poſſible from the ladies, and always endeavoured to be chearful, in order to keep them ſo.

As Mr. de Bonfoi was no ſtranger to Louiſa's family, nor to Mr. Meanwell's preceptorſhip to her couſin, the converſation frequently became general on that ſubject, and Louiſa became perfectly acquainted with the diſpoſitions of all her relations, and ſaw but a melancholy proſpect from the protection ſhe might with juſtice expect from them.

The Earl's youngeſt ſon, a handſome lad, of about fourteen, and at Eton ſchool, however differed in every reſpect from his parents, brothers, and ſiſters. There was a ſtrong reſemblance between Louiſa and him, as Mr. and Mrs. Meanwell obſerved; and he was poſſeſſed, like her,

her, of an excellent underſtanding, and every amiable quality.

Although Miſs Rivers had informed Mrs. Meanwell of almoſt every tranſaction with regard to herſelf, yet had ſhe never touched on the ſubject of Lord Belmont: her timidity not having permitted her to mention his name; yet, when alone, often would ſhe aſk her heart, where was he now? and what was become of the only man upon earth ſhe could confide in? Frequently in her ſolitary mournings for her departed friend, would ſhe drop and mingle a tear for Lord Belmont's abſence, and too often ſhe experienced

"——That ſecret ſenſe of woe,
"Which none but friends and lovers know."

Lord Croſslove, however, had returned the very evening of the morning he had left Florence with his nephew, fully determined, now his rival was gone, to

renew

renew his addreſſes to Miſs Rivers the enſuing morning; and, as he termed it, would beſiege her ſo cloſely, that before the month would be expired, ſhe ſhould be forced to ſurrender, and become his wife. But the melancholy cataſtrophe which had happened to Mr. and Madame de Polignac, put a period, for that time, to his towring hopes: though he had the brutality to preſage himſelf good ſucceſs from that melancholy event. The young Mademoiſelle, as he called her, being now friendleſs, and her ſpark gone, would be glad to jump at his offer; but being now under the neceſſity of ſuppreſſing his viſits for ſome time, he ſent regularly every morning to inquire after her health, and received no favourable anſwers on that ſubject.—Lady Belmont, among ſeveral other ladies, was likewiſe remarkably aſſiduous in her inquiries.

Near a month was now elapſed, and Louiſa being tolerably recovered, Mr. de

de Bonfoi thought of returning to Paris, where his preſence had been long requeſted; but his tenderneſs for her did not permit him to leave her till her health ſhould be re-eſtabliſhed, and her ſpirits ſufficiently fortified to enable her to form a plan for her future reſidence.

Mr. Meanwell ſeeing the porter of the hotel buſily employed in marking down the names of ſeveral perſons, and upon inquiring, found it was a liſt containing the names of ſuch of the nobleſſe as had ſent to inquire after Miſs Rivers' health; and taking it with him, as he was going to her room, ſaid, "Indeed, Mademoi-"ſelle, you have many friends in Flo-"rence, or, at leaſt, well-wiſhers. I "will read their names." And ſeeing that of Lord Croſslove repeated ſevera times, aſked her "who he was?" Louiſa reddened at the queſtion, and incapable of diſſimulation, gave him an account of what ſhe knew of him, and of the propoſal he had made her, and her

refuſal

refuſal of it; but not a ſyllable of Lord Belmont, with regard to her engagement, being enjoined ſecrecy; ſhe mentioned merely having danced with him, where, being rather attentive to her, Lord Croſslove had taken umbrage at it, and had removed his nephew from Florence. Mr. Meanwell, who knew Lord Croſslove exceedingly well, gave ſuch an unfavourable deſcription of his diſpoſition and manners, as made Mr. de Bonfoi congratulate Louiſa on her averſion for him. And apprehending ſhe would ſuffer much from his perſecution, if ſhe remained in Florence, adviſed her to quit it; and offered to take her under his protection, and conduct her ſafe to Paris, to the houſe of her good friend Mrs. Pianelli, where, he ſuppoſed, ſhe would chuſe to reſide. That he would always be happy whenever ſhe would honour him and his family with her company, aſſuring her, on the part of Madame de Bonfoi, with a moſt friendly reception, although

although ſhe could not provide her with an apartment at her houſe, on account of their large family. Louiſa, with tears of gratitude, thanked the worthy man for his gracious offer, gave him her reaſon why ſhe would not return to her excellent friends; as ſhe had kept up a conſtant correſpondence with Mrs. Pianelli, and was informed their houſe was entirely converted into a muſical academy, for perſons of both ſexes, her huſband's chief aim having been, for ſome time paſt, to accumulate an addition to his fortune, in order to enable him, in a very few years, to retire into the country. And as it would be almoſt impoſſible for Miſs Rivers to avoid mixing with the heterogeneous herd, ſhould ſhe again return to them. Her friend had adviſed her, in caſe ſhe could meet with a proper perſon to accompany and protect her, to viſit England; and as ſhe was happy to have found in Mrs. Meanwell that friend and protector, ſo agreeable to his wiſhes, ſhe intended

tended to accept of his generous propoſal. That ſhe, as it likewiſe fulfilled her dying friend's requeſt to her, through the dear deceaſed Marchioneſs's goodneſs, poſſeſſed of about forty louis d'ors, ſome valuable trinkets, and a well-furniſhed wardrobe; and hoped to be of as little charge to her new friends as poſſible, as her needle and pencil ſhould be employed to prevent her eating the bread of idleneſs. Mrs. Meanwell, overjoyed at Louiſa's conſenting to go with her to England, could not, however, help bluſhing at her mentioning the employing her pencil and needle, by way of ſupporting herſelf, and told her every part of her ſpeech had pleaſed her but that, to which ſhe greatly objected. Mr. de Bonfoi, on the contrary, commended her for it; it being, in his opinion, the ſureſt mark of friendſhip to contribute, as much as poſſible, towards the not being a burden to a generous and benevolent friend. It

was

was then reſolved on, Louiſa ſhould ſend cards of thanks to all thoſe ladies and gentlemen who had, during her illneſs, honoured her with their attention. That in the mean time they ſhould make ſpeedy preparations for their journey, and leave Florence, at fartheſt, in four days time, as Mr. de Bonfoi's buſineſs required his return to Paris. It was likewiſe agreed that Louiſa's journey ſhould be kept a profound ſecret, as ſhe feared Lord Croſslove's perſecution; and it was given out that ſhe followed Mr. de Bonfoi into France, which had all the appearance of truth and probability. Every thing being thus ſettled to the ſatisfaction of all parties, cards of thanks were iſſued, which procured her the tireſome ceremony of ſeeing ſeveral perſons much againſt her inclinations, Lady Belmont and Miſs Dupely being of the number. However, ſhe diſmiſſed them all in a very little time, alledging her newly recovered health would not permit her

to entertain company; and, in reality, her dejected looks and pale countenance denoted but too much how heavy her grief ſat on her. She likewiſe announced her departure from Florence, in order to avoid another ceremonious day of taking leave. As all imagined ſhe was returned to France, no queſtions were aſked on that ſubject, and ſhe was freed from all importunate viſitors, Croſslove excepted. That nobleman having, like the reſt of the nobility, received a card of thanks, waited on her almoſt immediately and repeated his hateful propoſal, though he ſaw the diſconſolate Louiſa almoſt drowned in tears during his viſit. The loſs of her dear friends, together with Lord Belmont's abſence, of which he was the occaſion, raiſed ſuch a tumult in her tender breaſt as made his ſight odious to her. But he, regardleſs of her affliction, rallied her, only ſaying, "Come, come, reſume your "wonted ſprightlineſs, tears will never "raiſe the dead; thoſe pale cheeks of

"yours's

"your's will never become Lady Croſs-
"love." Louiſa reddening with reſent-
ment, ſaid, "I have already informed
"your lordſhip of my determined reſolu-
"tion never to be your's. There is an
"unconquerable bar between you and me
"which no power on earth can remove; I
"muſt, therefore, inſiſt henceforth you
"will give over all hopes concerning
"me; for I would prefer death to being
"your wife. You will likewiſe ceaſe to
"importune me any farther with your
"viſits, for, from this moment, I will
"never ſee you more." So ſaying, ſhe
aroſe and was for leaving the room;
but he, ſtepping between her and the
door, ſaid, "Not ſo faſt, my little would-
"be fugitive; you muſt be my priſoner
"till I have a more favourable anſwer."
Mr. de Bonfoi then advanced, and with
the politeneſs of a gentleman told his
Lordſhip, "That as he was maſter of
"the hotel, and that lady under his pro-
"tection, he muſt excuſe him in not ſuf-

"fering any to aſſume an authority there "but himſelf, and inſiſted on his clearing "the door-way, and to let the lady paſs." —"You!" exclaimed Lord Croſslove, foaming with paſſion, "Why, who are "you? Do you think I fear you!" Louiſa, whoſe ſpirits were weak, and dreading a duel, was near ſinking on the floor with apprehenſion; but being ſupported by Mrs. Meanwell, ſhe recovered a little; Mr. Meanwell, at the ſame time, coming up to the door with a moſt ſtern look, and a motion of his hand, removed his angry lordſhip immediately, who, on his ſide, ſeeing the confuſion he had occaſioned, ſecretly begged pardon of the company, accuſing his violent love for the lady as being the cauſe of it.

Mr. de Bonfoi, unwilling to quarrel, begged he would give over all thoughts of her, as it was her unalterable and fixed reſolution never to marry him; beſides, my Lord, added he, her affliction is too great, at preſent, to admit of ſuch

a ſub-

a ſubject; and you ſhould have conſidered her weak condition, and almoſt broken-hearted ſituation. "I was to blame," replied his lordſhip, "and once more aſk "your pardon. I will try what effect "writing will produce," and then took his leave.

In the evening he ſent a moſt obſequious letter to Miſs Rivers; but as it related entirely to the ſame ſubject, it is needleſs to repeat it. Louiſa begged Mr. Meanwell to anſwer it in the French language, and that ſhe would ſign it.

My readers may be aſſured, as that gentleman could not have any great affection for his lordſhip, his anſwer was ſufficiently peremptory, though compriſed but in few lines, to deter him from any farther application in perſon. His lordſhip ſolicited by letter after letter, but not receiving any anſwers after the firſt, he was conſtrained to give over the purſuit, but ſwore with bitter imprecations he would be revenged on her, as he would

have her watched, and run away with her in order to compel her at the altar to receive his vows. And accordingly he planted ſpies at a little diſtance from the hotel, to give him notice whenever Louiſa ſhould attempt to take the air. Mr. Meanwell, as a lover, was not without ſome ſuſpicions of that nature, which, however, he kept to himſelf; and as he had every thing to fear from the violence of his rival's diſpoſition, he contented himſelf with watching his ſteps as much as poſſible, and by perſuading the ladies to confine their walks to the garden of the hotel, eluding thereby Lord Croſslove's ſchemes being put in execution. He alſo had the precaution of ſending all their trunks away by night, truſting to no one but himſelf, and his own ſervant to carry them to the inn, from whence they were to be ſent to Leghorn, to be ſhipped off for England, all directed to himſelf. By this circumſpection he defeated all his lordſhip's plans, whoſe ſpies had not half

the

the dexterity of diſcovering as Mr. Meanwell had in concealing his manœuvres.

The day of their departure was at laſt fixed, and carriages were ordered to attend at nine in the morning; but as the ladies were to take a different road from that of Mr. de Bonfoi, Mr. Meanwell adviſed them, if Miſs Rivers would not think it injurious to her health, to ſet off with his ſiſter about ſix, as probably ſhe might thereby avoid ſeeing Lord Croſslove, who, he had a ſtrong idea, would not ſo eaſily let her depart, without ſeeing her once more. This plan was with pleaſure adopted by all, and Mr. Meanwell himſelf, the following morning, at four o'clock, went to order a chaiſe and proper horſes from a different place than where Mr. de Bonfoi had his. The ladies, ready at the appointed hour, took their leave of Mr. de Bonfoi. The afflicted Louiſa, at the thought of leaving the ſpot where the remains of her precious

friends were depoſited, had no words but tears, which fell in profuſion upon his face and hands, to thank that worthy man for his benevolence to her, who, on his ſide, preſented her with the deceaſed Marchioneſs's watch, richly embelliſhed with diamonds, and of great value, as a token of his friendſhip; as likewiſe an elegant diamond ring to Mrs. Meanwell; and having handed the ladies into the chaiſe, bade them adieu!—the tears trickling down his honeſt face, Mr. Meanwell and his ſervant both on horſeback riding on each ſide of the chaiſe, and were ſoon joined by Pharmace and his man, at the requeſt of our young lover; but who, notwithſtanding, were to keep at ſome diſtance, leſt the ſight of the former might renew heart-breaking ideas in Louiſa.

They had ſcarcely been an hour in the chaiſe, and purſuing their journey, when Mr. Meanwell perceived three men on horſe-

horſeback following them with incredible ſwiftneſs, as likewiſe a poſt-chaiſe, which, to all appearance, ſeemed to be empty. Upon which riding up to Mr. Pharmace, who, as before obſerved, kept at ſome diſtance with his ſervant, they agreed to ſtop, in order to reconnoitre the horſemen, when, to their inexpreſſible ſorrow, not aſtoniſhment, they found it to be Lord Croſslove himſelf, mounted on an exceeding good horſe, accompanied by two of his ſervants equally well mounted and a third in the chaiſe. They took not the leaſt notice of either Mr. Meanwell or his party, but paſſing by them furiouſly with an intent to overtake the carriage, which occaſioned our gentlemen to clap ſpurs to their horſes, and to come up with them juſt as they had reached it. Louiſa gave a violent ſcream at the ſight of Lord Croſslove, and fainted in her companion's arms. Mr. Meanwell immediately put himſelf in a poſture of defence, and preſenting a piſtol, aſked his lordſhip, "What

" he meant by ſtopping the carriage?
" which was the action of a highwayman,
" and deſerved the chaſtiſement of one
" with having his brains blown out, which
" he would put in execution, if the fears of
" alarming the ladies by the report of the
" piſtol did not prevent him." " I mean
" nothing in the world," anſwered he,
" but to have that lady change carriages,
" and be drove with me to the next vil-
" lage, where I will marry her, and then
" run away with her if you dare!" And without regarding the piſtol, or even trying to ſcreen himſelf from its effects, he called to his people to come up with his chaiſe and aſſiſt him in putting the lady into it; but his aſſiſtants being kept off by Pharmace and the ſervants, Mr. Meanwell bid the poſtillion drive on with the ladies, whilſt he kept his lordſhip in awe with the piſtol cocked, who being enraged, calling his people daſtardly cowardly villians; and was turning about in a violent emotion to lay his

whip

whip to them, when his horſe threw him, and he lay for ſome moments ſpeechleſs. In an inſtant the intended combatants aſſembled about him, and having inſiſted on him to riſe, he roared out, in a moſt dreadful manner, he had broken his leg, which Mr. Pharmace, on examination, found effectually ſo, and offered his aſſiſtance.

Mr. Meanwell, too generous to exult over his lordſhip's misfortune, recommended Pharmace as a man of ſkill and experience; and having preſented the latter with ten ſequins, (five guineas) as a gratuity to his ſervant for his intrepidity, and wiſhed Lord Croſslove, whom pain had now rendered ſulky, a ſpeedy recovery; and leaving him in the care of the ſurgeon, ſet off with his ſervant in purſuit of the ladies. It was near an hour before he overtook the chaiſe, and juſt at the entrance of the village where they were to change horſes; and coming up to them, with a ſmiling countenance, of-

fered his hand to help them out of the chaiſe. Louiſa, who was by this time perfectly recovered, cried out in an ecſtaſy of joy, "Your brother is here "ſafe, and unhurt."

Mr. Meanwell was not a little elated at the ſatisfaction expreſſed in her countenance at the ſight of him, as lovers are ever induſtrious in flattering themſelves when they meet with the leaſt encouragement. Mr. Meanwell having conducted the ladies into a decent apartment, and having called for ſome refreſhments, gave them a particular detail of the rencontre with Lord Croſslove, and concluded with ſaying, "That he was ſorry for his lordſhip's misfortune; yet, as he entirely brought it upon himſelf, and as he would undoubtedly be confined for ſome months, Miſs Rivers would have nothing to fear of his undertaking a ſecond plot againſt her, and ſhe might travel on in the greateſt ſecurity; which effectually was the caſe, and they arrived in England without any farther

farther impediment, and Louiſa much improved in her health and ſpirits.

Dr. Meanwell, the father of Mr. and Mrs. Meanwell, received them with all imaginable ſatisfaction; and having had previous notice from his ſon of their landing at Dover, he had prepared every thing for their reception.

Louiſa was charmed with the venerable old gentleman, who, on his ſide, conceived a moſt tender and fatherly affection for her; for being perfectly acquainted with her family, and having always reſpected her father, whom he likewiſe had known, and whoſe misfortunes he had often lamented; and bearing a ſtriking likeneſs to the captain, endeared her ſtill more to him. But ſhe had not been long an inhabitant of this peaceful and agreeable manſion, before ſhe perceived, to her inexpreſſible ſorrow, that Mr. Meanwell, junior's, attention to her proceeded from a different motive than that of extreme politeneſs and good

breeding,

breeding. It pained her to be compelled to quit this agreeable family, which certainly would be the caſe, ſhould he ever declare himſelf to her; and, at the ſame time, ſhe was hurt to ſee an amiable young man, whom ſhe perfectly eſteemed, and liked as a friend, ſuffer for her ſake. But as the great reſpect which accompanied his words and actions, conſcious of his own inferiority, did not permit him to open his heart to her; ſhe endeavoured to be as careful as poſſible, and appeared to be entirely ignorant of his ſentiments for her.

This ſucceeded, and young Meanwell checking his paſſion as much as poſſible, Louiſa began to look as beautiful as ever. The thoughts of Lord Belmont cauſed her from time to time to ſigh; but having a perfect confidence in his honour, ſhe entertained the flattering hope he would prove, at the ſtated period, ſuch as her heart wiſhed him to be: and being far from a deſponding diſpoſition, but, oh

the

the contrary, naturally lively and chearful, though ſhe had many bitter trials to convert her amiable temper into bitter melancholy, yet her ſuperior reaſon and ſtrong underſtanding carried her through the variety of viciſſitudes ſhe had experienced with amazing fortitude and patience.

What added greatly to her return of health, was, the agreeable letters ſhe received from her worthy friend Mrs. Pianelli, as likewiſe thoſe of Mr. de Bonfoi, who informed her with what ſhe was acquainted already, the accident of Lord Croſslove, who had been exceedingly ill, and would, in all probability, be confined to his room for four or five months, as he was of a groſs, corpulent habit of body, and had often been heard to ſay, "That "he ſincerely repented of his brutal beha-"viour to her, looking upon what he ſuf-"fered at that time, to be a judgment "upon him for his unparallelled perſecu-"tion of her."

Louiſa,

Louiſa, who was goodneſs itſelf, ſincerely forgave his lordſhip for his former cruelty—his repentance alone was a ſufficient plea to excite her compaſſion, and exterminate her contempt of him. As Louiſa viſited with Mrs. Meanwell in ſeveral families of faſhion, where ſhe was the univerſal admiration, ſhe was perſuaded by ſeveral of them to pay a viſit to the Earl and Counteſs Rivers, which could in no ways prove prejudicial to her, as, on the contrary, the omitting it might be alledged againſt her as want of reſpect and duty towards her father and family; and Mr. and Mrs. Meanwell being of the ſame opinion, ſhe accordingly waited on them, without any previous notice ſent them, and accompanied by Mrs. Meanwell in her carriage, repaired to Groſvenor-Square.

The ladies were introduced into a parlour, where Lady Rivers ſent Mrs. Meanwell word ſhe would join her immediately, that lady's name having been ſingly announced.

nounced.—In the mean time, Mr. William Rivers, youngeſt ſon to the Earl, of whom mention has been made by young Meanwell, as differing ſo much from his brothers and ſiſters, this young gentleman ſeeing Louiſa enter the room, was ſo pleaſed with her beauty and elegant figure, that he ran up ſtairs into the room where his parents and ſiſters were ſitting, and cried out in raptures, ſpeaking to his mother, "Oh! Madam, there is the moſt "beautiful lady below with Mrs. Mean-"well my eyes ever beheld: do, pray, "go down and ſee her." The young ladies, his ſiſters, both exceeding plain women, ſaid with a ſneer, "She muſt be "beautiful indeed if you think ſo, for I "never ſaw a boy have a worſe taſte "than yourſelf; but we will go down "with mamma and ſee this beauty." "You had better not," replied the gentleman, "ſhe will ſhine ſtill more "conſpicuouſly between ſuch foils as "you and Lady Barbara."—"Inſolent "puppy!"

" puppy!" they both exclaimed as they were following the Counteſs down the ſtairs, attended by the Earl and William, and were but too well convinced of the truth of his aſſertion, as the envious bluſh on their cheek, and their careleſs half curtſy on their entering the room, but too plainly demonſtrated.

Louiſa roſe on the entrance of her uncle and aunt, whoſe eyes were rivetted upon her, although their diſcourſe was addreſſed to Mrs. Meanwell with an " How do you do? why did you not call before?" Mrs. Meanwell's anſwer, however, obliged them to direct their looks towards her; and being devoured by curioſity, both the Earl and the Counteſs aſking at the ſame time, " Pray who is " this young lady?" " That young la- " dy," ſaid Mrs. Meanwell, " who I " have the honour to introduce to you, " is Miſs Rivers, daughter of Captain " Rivers, and your niece." " That Miſs " Rivers!" was heard from every voice

at

at the ſame time. Louiſa then riſing and ſtepping forward to the Counteſs, and with the moſt amiable modeſty and ſweeteſt tone of voice, ſaid, "I hope "your Ladyſhip will pardon the liberty "I have taken, but I thought it my duty "to pay my reſpects to you and the Earl "as I was come to England." "And "pray who ſent you, Madam?" ſaid Lord Rivers, in a ſurly manner, "Did I "not ſignify my ſentiments reſpecting "you to Lord C. the ambaſſador in Paris, "that I did not know you, or had a wiſh "to know you?"—"And ſo bold, too, to "come without having been aſked!" ſaid one of the young ladies. "Indeed, "Mrs. Meanwell, in this you have not "acted with your accuſtomed good breed-"ing and politeneſs."

The diſconcerted Louiſa was ſo amazed and confuſed at what ſhe heard, as to be deprived of the power of ſpeech; nor had ſhe much opportunity of replying, as Lady Rivers immediately cried out,

"Be

" Be quiet all of you; you have no bu-
" ſineſs with her:" then, in a ſcornful manner, ſaid, " Well, Miſs, and what
" would you have me do for you?"
" Do for me, Madam!" replied ſhe, " I
" only wiſh to be permitted to wait on
" you ſometimes."—" I'll give you one
" piece of advice," rejoined the Lady,
" Diveſt yourſelf of that fooliſh pride
" of being called Miſs Rivers, and aſ-
" ſume any other name, then I may per-
" haps recommend you to ſome lady of
" my acquaintance who may be in want
" of a maid ſervant, and—"

Louiſa could hold out no longer, but reddening with indignation, ſaid, " Di-
" veſt myſelf of my name! I glory in
" it, and add more honour to it, though
" in an humble ſtate, than thoſe who,
" like you, degrade it by inſolence and
" pride, which puts you below my con-
" tempt, and exalts me in the eyes of
" the good and virtuous, by rendering
" me infinitely your ſuperior," and immediately

mediately left the room. "A moſt ex-
"cellent reply," ſaid young Rivers, as he followed to the door; and added, "I "am hurt beyond deſcription, Madam, "at the unhuman treatment you have "received," at the ſame time preſenting his hand to aſſiſt her getting into her carriage. "Her father to a tittle," ſaid the Earl, as ſhe was leaving the room. "A moſt complete Miſs as ever I ſaw," echoed Lady Martha after her ſiſter. Lady Rivers, unable to anſwer from vexation at her niece's reply, bit her lips, and turning to Mrs. Meanwell, ſaid, "I'll "take another opportunity to thank you "for introducing this pert little baggage "to me, which I inſiſt on never ſeeing "any more at my houſe,"—"Nor ſhall "you, Lady Rivers," anſwered ſhe, "ever have that honour again: I bluſh "at your behaviour ſo unbecoming a "woman of faſhion; nor ſhall I ever "preſent myſelf before you. As for

"your

" your daughters, their unmannerly in-
" ſolence and ill-bred impertinence have
" rendered them the town talk already,
" nor ſhall this laſt ſpecimen of their ar-
" rogance be kept a ſecret, I give you
" my word;" and, leaving the room, was handed into the carriage by young Rivers, who had remained at the ſtreet-door, modeſtly contemplating his couſin's beauty.

Louiſa was far from being hurt or melancholy at her relation's reception of her; it was what ſhe expected; and ſaid to her friend as the carriage drove off, " I have fulfilled my duty, Mrs. Mean-
" well, and forgive them their inhuma-
" nity."

Having returned home, the Mr. Meanwells were ſhocked at the narration, and the good old gentleman fearing it might have an effect on her ſpirits, though there was not the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe it, as ſhe heartily deſpiſed their proceedings towards her, deſired his daughter to propoſe

propoſe her going to the play that evening, "and let Tom, added he, accom-"pany you both." This was accepted with thanks; and Tom having ſecured a front ſeat in one of the ſide boxes in the beſt part of the houſe, eſcorted the ladies to Drury-lane playhouſe—The houſe was uncommonly crouded—the play the School for Scandal, where both Mr. King and Mrs Abington ſo deſervedly fill up the chief characters. Our agreeable trio were ſcarcely ſeated before they beheld, in one of the ſide boxes oppoſite to theirs, Earl Rivers, his lady, their daughters, and three ſons.

As Louiſa was in a manner a ſtranger there all eyes were immediately fixed upon her, excepting thoſe of her female relations, who obſtinately bent theirs upon the Orcheſtra, leſt they ſhould meet thoſe of their couſin's. As Louiſa looked inexpreſſibly beautiful, the confuſed timidity ſo viſible in her countenance, at her finding herſelf the object of attention

of

of the beſt part of the audience, added ſo conſiderably to her natural charms, that, till the curtain was drawn up, nothing was heard but murmured whiſperings of "Who is that lady? Where has "this beauty been buried?" and the like. The play began, ſhe gave her entire attention to the performance of it, which occaſioned another ſurpriſe on the part of her gazing admirers, who, for the moſt part, not only ſpend their time at the theatre in converſation with thoſe who will liſten to them, to the great diſcouragement of many a reſpectable actor who exerts his utmoſt power to pleaſe, but likewiſe prevents thoſe from hearing who come there for fulfilling their intention of ſeeing and hearing a play. The firſt act being over, Mr. William Rivers tapped at the box, which being opened, he, in the politeſt manner, addreſſed Miſs Rivers, aſking her "How "ſhe liked the play?" Which ſhe very politely expreſſed her ſatisfaction of, and then evaded as much as poſſible any far-

ther

ther converſation with him; not from any diſlike of the young man himſelf, who ſhe was conſcious was innocent of his parents' unkind behaviour to her, but to avoid incurring their diſpleaſure by an overmarked eſteem and civility to her; not but whenever he ſpoke to her ſhe anſwered him with all imaginable affability, but ſhe did not chuſe to keep up a continual diſcourſe for reaſons above mentioned.

Mrs. Meanwell was a joyous ſpectator of the viſible uneaſineſs which Earl Rivers and family exhibited in their looks at William's remarkable attention and politeneſs with which he accoſted and converſed with his couſin; and ſhe took care, with a little ſpite, however, to inform a lady who ſat below her in the ſame box, of her morning adventure with Miſs Rivers at the Earl's houſe, which ſhe did with the greateſt ſatisfaction, as the lady ſhe had choſen as an object of her information was of the moſt communicative diſpoſition in the metropolis,

polis, and ſhe was well aſſured that by the following day it would be the tea-table talk all over London. Mr. William Rivers, after a little more chat with Mr and Mrs. Meanwell, left their box, and bowing attentively to his couſin, wiſhed her and her party a good night.

At his return to his father's box, all his relations ſeemed to declare war againſt him; the Earl frowned, the Counteſs ſcolded, his brothers looked ſcornfully, and his ſiſters ſpitefully refuſed his ſitting between them, as he had done before his leaving them; by all which abſurd behaviour they expoſed themſelves infinitely more than Mrs. Meanwell could poſitively have done, by her account to Mrs. Chatwell. That lady, fond to her heart of a little ſcandal, thought the comedy much too long, as it prevented her giving vent to what ſhe had heard, and what ſhe had obſerved, upon all which ſhe was determined her improve-

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ments and additions ſhould not be wanting.—At the end of the ſecond act, Viſcount Rivers maliciouſly ſaid to his ſiſters, "I'll go and inſult Will's couſin, by aſk-"ing her how ſhe likes Tom Meanwell?" The young gentleman earneſtly ſolicited his brother not to be guilty of ſuch an atrocious breach of urbanity and good manners. "What has the poor thing done "to you?" ſaid he in a dejected tone of voice: "Is it her fault ſhe is unfortu-"nate?" His parents objected to his propoſal, as likewiſe did his brother John, who ſaid, "She is handſome, "James; let her beauty plead for her." But he, notwithſtanding, would follow his inclinations, being thereto encouraged by his ſiſters, who were exaſperated at the words of beauty and her being handſome. He repaired to the box, where Louiſa and her party were then making their obſervations on the actors, and on ſuch parts of the play as pleaſed them the moſt. Although Mrs. Meanwell had

ſeen Viſcount Rivers leave his box, unobſerved to Louiſa, who never caſt a look that way, yet ſhe had not the ſmalleſt idea he could have the confidence to come to theirs, as her brother and himſelf were not upon good terms; how great then was her aſtoniſhment when, at his coming there, he familiarly accoſted him with an "How are you, Doctor?" Louiſa juſt at that time turning her head on the opening of the door, he cried out, "A fine girl, "faith; you are a happy fellow, Tom." The contemptuous look which ſhe then gave him, though not knowing who he was, and Mrs. Meanwell exclaiming, with a ſtern countenance, "For ſhame, "Lord Rivers! do you know where you "are?" awed him ſo effectually, that he remained ſilent for ſome moments, biting his nails.

Louiſa, now ſenſible who was their viſitor, continued unconcerned her converſation with the ladies as before, which mortified his pride not a little, ſeeing him-

himſelf of ſuch ſmall conſequence as not to occaſion, in the leaſt, any alteration in her behaviour, when he imagined ſhe would have bluſhed and been greatly diſconcerted. Mrs. Meanwell likewiſe, who had a moſt deſpicable opinion of him, never vouchſafed him even a ſingle look, nor did her brother attempt to ſay another word to him. Vexed to a degree, he was determined not to give it up ſo, but to vent his ſpleen before he left them, ſaying to Mrs. Meanwell, "You was in "Groſvenor ſquare this morning, I "hear;"—"And am now in the play-"houſe you ſee," ſaid ſhe, with no other ceremony or attention.—"You are grown "very ſharp," retorted he: "have you "learnt that in France?"—"Not half "ſharp enough," replied ſhe, "to a perſon "who, like you, wants decency and good "manners."—"Now," reſumed he, "I'll "apply to that pretty girl there. Do I "want good manners, Miſs?" ſpeaking to Miſs Rivers, and tapping her ſhoulder

—" Pray, Madam," ſaid ſhe to Mrs. Chatwell, without taking the leaſt notice of the Viſcount, " is not that man one of " thoſe, who, from their brutiſh behavi- " our, are called ſhilling-gallery gentry?" —Mrs. Chatwell burſt out into a violent fit of laughter, which communicated itſelf to her neighbour and Mrs. Meanwell, who heartily joined in it, and by which they diſconcerted his creſt-fallen Lordſhip ſo much, that he inſtantly left the box, and the playhouſe, not having preſence of mind ſufficient for the inventing of a plauſible tale to communicate to his ſiſters, who, notwithſtanding, from the ſide glances which they had caſt on their couſin and her party, were pretty well convinced of their brother's defeat, having particularly remarked Louiſa's inattentive and ſcornful behaviour to him.

" The Viſcount is conquered and fled," ſaid Mr. John Rivers—" And I dare an- " ſwer," replied William, " he has met " with the inſult he intended to have be- " ſtowed;

"ſtowed; and I rejoice at it with all my "heart."

The third act now began, and our amiable heroine and her company remained quiet and happy the remaining part of the evening.

At their leaving the houſe, her two youngeſt couſins, John and William, ſtood at the door; the firſt to gaze at her, the other to help her to the carriage; in which, however, he was diſappointed, Mr. Meanwell then having the honour of holding her hand; and as Mrs. Meanwell was unprovided with a cavalier, he gallantly eſcorted her to the chariot.

Louiſa, in high ſpirits, at her returning home, charmed the good Mr. Meanwell, and the party with him, conſiſting of two ladies and a gentleman, who had amuſed themſelves at whiſt, during their abſence at the play-houſe. As they were engaged to ſtay ſupper, which was ſoon after ſerved up, and the deſert and the wine being put upon the table, ſhe was

requeſted to ſing, which ſhe did with ſuch an inimitable grace, accompanying herſelf upon the guittar, that all the company was delighted with her. Young Meanwell alone ſeemed penſive; his eyes fixed upon Louiſa from whom it was impoſſible to withdraw them, till thereto compelled by his ſiſter's looks, and addreſſing herſelf every now and then to him, when ſhe perceived he was abſent to every one, the object of his heart excepted. Mrs. Meanwell was no ſtranger to what paſſed in her brother's heart, although he never had uttered to her, or any body elſe, how deeply he was enamoured of the lovely Louiſa. It pained her to ſee him in this ſituation, as ſhe had often heard her mention her unwillingneſs to enter into any engagement with any man until ſhe had completed her twenty-firſt year: and even not then, unleſs the object ſhould prove ſuch, as would promiſe her permanent happineſs, and whoſe birth and rank in he world would authoriſe her choice,

ſhould

ſhould her father be ſtill living. As to the firſt, ſhe had no reaſon in the world to think Louiſa entertained any other ſentiments for her brother than thoſe of friendſhip, founded upon gratitude, as ſhe was much obliged to him in ſeveral reſpects, and on every occaſion ſhe ſhewed her being ſenſible of it, by doing all in her power to oblige him. But that more refined part of friendſhip which only ſubſiſts between lovers, ſhe was very well aſſured, ſhe had not the leaſt idea of.

A circumſtance then occurred which ſoon brought the ladies to an eclairciſſement. As Louiſa was extremely cautious how ſhe incurred obligations, and had found that though ſhe frequently had offered to pay her board and lodgings to Mrs. Meanwell as long as her little fund would laſt, and had been as frequently refuſed, ſo her prudence would not permit her to truſt entirely to her friend's liberality, but employed her pencil upon ſilk, gauze, and other materials; and not

only conſtrained Mrs. Meanwell to accept of ſeveral pieces elegantly finiſhed, both in painting and embroidery, as a ſmall token of her gratitude, but likewiſe laid by a great many, to diſpoſe of, whenever her little ſtock ſhould be exhauſted. Mrs. Meanwell one morning coming into her room, and perceiving her buſily employed in rolling up fan mounts, toilette boxes, work bags, ſhawls, either all exquiſitely painted, or embroidered by herſelf, aſked her why ſhe kept all thoſe things by her, and why not rather diſpoſe of them, than to keep them till newer faſhions ſhould put them out of date? "I know not "how to go about the diſpoſing of them," anſwered Louiſa.—"Truſt them with me," replied Mrs. Meanwell; "I know "an honeſt milliner who will do you "juſtice." To which Louiſa agreeing, her friend immediately ſent for Mrs. Egrette, the milliner in queſtion, who eagerly embraced the offer, agreeing to pay upwards of thirty pounds for the whole;

whole; to the no ſmall ſatisfaction of both ladies. The Counteſs of Sweetland, a moſt amiable and excellent woman, having ſoon after made a purchaſe of one of the fans which Mrs. Egrette had the moment before carried home from Mrs. Meanwell, and being delighted with the execution of it, aſked her if ſhe knew the name of the limner, who could in this wonderful manner thus imitate nature? upon which Mrs. Egrette told her, ſhe imagined him to be a Frenchman, as a lady in that neighbourhood, being lately returned from that kingdom, had not only diſpoſed of that fan to her, but of ſeveral other wonderful performances, all of which ſhe exhibited before her Ladyſhip, who was ſo delighted with the work of the ſeveral articles, that ſhe eagerly wiſhed to ſee the importer of them, not thinking it poſſible they were ever intended for ſale, unleſs the owner of them was thereto compelled by misfortunes: and being, upon inquiry, informed

formed of Mrs. Meanwell's abode, on her return home ſhe ſent a card to that lady, intreating her permiſſion to wait on her the next morning; which was acceded to.

Lady Sweetland accordingly, the following morning, came to her appointment. She found the ladies together, agreeably and induſtriouſly employed; Mrs. Meanwell reading, and Louiſa painting a fireſcreen. After the neceſſary apologies for her viſit were over, ſhe led immediately to the queſtion which had brought her hither; and ſpeaking with raptures of the excellent artiſt, begged to know his name. Louiſa having put her work aſide, coloured exceſſively at this requeſt, and Mrs. Meanwell looked rather confuſed, which Lady Sweetland obſerving, aſked pardon, and hoped her curioſity had not given offence. "Not "in the leaſt, Madam," anſwered Mrs. Meanwell, ſomewhat more compoſed. "The artiſt of the work you ſo much "admire is a lady, and my particular "friend,

" friend, whoſe uncommon genius leads " her to employ her hours of leiſure in " different works of fancy; and having " finiſhed ſeveral valuable pieces, which " lying hid in drawers, to ſatisfy her gene- " rous diſpoſition of preſenting them to " one friend or another, of which ſhe " had already given too many proofs, I " earneſtly entreated her to diſpoſe of " ſome, to enable her to provide the ma- " terials requiſite for freſh proofs of her " ingenuity." Louiſa, unable any longer to witneſs the praiſes of her friend in her behalf, was for leaving the room; when Lady Sweetland, inſtantly imagining her to be the performer, complimented her in the moſt delicate manner on her excellent taſte and execution; and having intimated her deſire of ſeeing the ſcreen ſhe was employed upon at her entering into the room, Louiſa immediately complied with all imaginable affability; which charmed the heart of her Ladyſhip, who ſecretly confeſſed to herſelf, ſhe never had ſeen

any

any thing half ſo lovely as the object now before her.

The converſation afterwards took another turn, as Mrs. Chatwell's communicative diſpoſition had diſplayed itſelf to all her acquaintance, with regard to Lord Rivers and family's treatment of their niece; ſo likewiſe Lady Sweetland had heard ſomething about it, though in a confuſed manner; for as ſhe hated tittle tattle and ſcandal, ſhe was always the laſt who was informed of any thing relative to it; but hearing the many encomiums beſtowed on Miſs Rivers, ſhe teſtified a ſtrong deſire of ſeeing and knowing her. "I knew her amiable mother," added ſhe, "when Miſs Portmore; and then but a "child—I was in Ireland juſt after Colo- "nel Portmore loſt his valuable wife." —"Oh, Madam," exclaimed Louiſa, almoſt drowned in tears, "I am the un- "fortunate offspring of that amiable "Miſs Portmore—That unhappy orphan, "rejected and deſpiſed by her relations."

—"You,

—"You, Miſs Rivers!" interrupted Lady Sweetland, in the utmoſt amazement —"My lovely girl, where have you been "ſecreted all this time, and now ſhine "forth with ſuch aſtoniſhing perfecti-"ons?" Then taking her in her arms, wept over her and kiſſed her with a motherly affection, crying out at the ſame time, "Bleſſed be that Providence that "directed my ſteps to Mrs. Egrette's—I "will act a mother's part by you, if that "Lady will permit me; but pray inform "me where you have received that ex-"cellent education ſo conſpicuous in your "behaviour, and thoſe accompliſhments "which make you the admiration of all "who know you?"—Mrs. Meanwell then informed her Ladyſhip of as much of Louiſa's ſtory as time would then permit; and Lady Sweetland, all wonder and amazement, frequently interrupted her and Louiſa, who aſſiſted in relating the various viciſſitudes in life, by exclaiming, "Oh, my dear young lady, Providence

"hath

" hath hitherto guided and protected you,
" and no doubt for ſome happy end."
Her time for returning home drawing near, ſhe affectionately took leave of her and Mrs. Meanwell, earneſtly ſoliciting their company that evening at her houſe, in order to be farther informed of every particular relating to herſelf, and that, when acquainted with how far, and in what manner, her engagement conſiſted with Mrs. Meanwell, ſhe intended to make her an offer of her houſe, and herſelf as a mother to her, and departed.

Louiſa was charmed with Lady Sweetland's manner, converſation, and affability; nor was Mrs. Meanwell leſs in love with her Ladyſhip; only ſhe did not reliſh her propoſal of depriving her of Miſs Rivers, who ſhe really loved, and ſaid, half ſmiling, " She is a naughty woman
" if ſhe takes you away from me;
" and I ſhall not love her."—" My dear
" Mrs. Meanwell," replied Miſs Rivers,
" do not think me ſo ungrateful as to pre-

" fer

"fer living any where, to my reſidence "with you."—"Well, well, my dear," replied ſhe, "I know your generous way "of thinking, and I truſt you will have "no reaſon to deſire our ſeparation."—"Very cogent and important reaſons they "muſt be indeed," replied Louiſa, "that "could effectuate ſuch a painful taſk as "that would prove to me." Mrs. Meanwell then thought it more prudent not to acquaint either her father or brother with Lady Sweetland's offer of her houſe, but confine their detail to that lady's viſit, what had occaſioned it, her knowledge of Louiſa's mother, and her obliging invitation of them that evening; in which ſhe acquieſced.

Young Mr. Meanwell was remarkably attentive to this narration of her ſiſter, as ſhe was the ſpeaker, and grew exceedingly melancholy and penſive upon the occaſion, as if he foreſaw the object of his love would ſoon be ſnatched from him; his father obſerving it, aſked what was the mat-

ter

ter with him? At which he coloured, and withdrew his eyes from Louiſa, on which they had been fixed, and pleaded head-ach. Louiſa perceived but too well, to her ſorrow, that ſhe was the cauſe of his dejection, and ſecretly pitied him. Mrs. Meanwell, who tenderly loved her brother, felt every pang for him which hopeleſs love generally inſpires, being too well convinced he muſt not hope for ſucceſs there.

The viſiting hour being arrived, the ladies prepared for Portman ſquare. Poor Meanwell, as he handed Louiſa into the chariot, trembled in ſuch a manner, as obliged her to ſay to him, "I am certain "you are not well, Mr. Meanwell.—You "had better have ſome advice, and keep "at home this evening."—"Your oblig-"ing anxiety for me, Madam," anſwered he, "will I hope prove my beſt phy-"ſician." Louiſa bluſhed exceedingly at theſe words, as he never before had given her any reaſon to ſuppoſe he loved her,

but

but from his looks.—She therefore made not the leaſt reply—her ſilence, then, ſhe judged denoted a ſufficient diſapprobation of his expreſſion. Mrs. Meanwell likewiſe looked diſconcerted at Louiſa, as if to beg pardon for her brother, and doubted of obtaining it; but ſhe, gueſſing her thoughts, relieved her by beginning a ſubject entirely different from that which now troubled them both, and aſked her if ſhe thought Mr. William Rivers reſembled her? This entirely reſtored Mrs. Meanwell to her former ſerenity, that young man being a great favourite of hers: and having anſwered her queſtion in the affirmative, the Earl and his family furniſhed them with converſation till they arrived in Portman Square.

Lord and Lady Sweetland received them with that politeneſs and affability becoming perſons of their rank, eſpecially to thoſe whoſe viſits inſpire them with ſincere ſatisfaction. Miſs Rivers in particular attracted his Lordſhip's immediate notice,

tice, not only on account of her beautiful face and elegant perſon, but as ſhe bore a moſt ſtrong reſemblance of both her father and mother in her countenance, he having been particularly intimate with Captain Rivers, and had ſeen her mother frequently in Ireland before ſhe was married; ſo that, after the firſt compliments were over, he addreſſed himſelf to her, aſſuring her if Lady Sweetland had not informed him who they were to have the honour of receiving that evening, he would have known her to have been his worthy long-loſt friend's daughter; and added, that it would make him exceedingly happy would ſhe permit him to act a father's part by her, by taking her under his immediate protection, as ſuch an amiable companion would greatly augment Lady Sweetland's felicity; at the ſame time as her manner, her diſpoſition, and her accompliſhments, would furniſh his daughters with a moſt excellent pattern for their future conduct in life. As his Lordſhip's kind offer was

rather

rather abrupt, and Louiſa unprepared for it, ſhe only teſtified her gratitude by her looks, and a profound inclination with her head. Lady Sweetland then begged of her and Mrs. Meanwell, in the moſt obliging manner, to inform her Lord of ſome of the moſt material circumſtances of Miſs Rivers' hiſtory; which Mrs. Meanwell kindly undertook, aſſiſted every now and then by Louiſa. Lord Sweetland was aſtoniſhed beyond expreſſion at the various viciſſitudes ſo young a perſon as herſelf had experienced, and the miraculous and viſible hand of Providence, which had extricated her out of all her difficulties, and had raiſed her friends when ſhe moſt needed them: and underſtanding from herſelf the obligation ſhe was under to Dr. Meanwell and his family, neither he nor his Lady dared to urge her any more to quit thoſe benevolent friends, in order to reſide at Sweetland Houſe, they themſelves abhorring ingratitude; therefore could not but commend Louiſa for her attachment

tachment to Mrs. Meanwell, and the obliging her to the utmoſt of her power. Lady Sweetland nevertheleſs gave her the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of the moſt hearty welcome to her houſe, ſhould any unforeſeen event compel her to quit the hoſpitable roof of her amiable friends: "And," added ſhe, "as my duty to the Queen "demands my frequent attendance on her "Majeſty, which obliges me to leave the "care of my daughters to thoſe who are "not ſo well qualified as I could wiſh to "be their companions in my abſence, "although ſtrict in morals and principles, "I need not repeat how agreeable and "uſeful your company will be to me, "ſhould you once more prove the ſport "of fortune, and leave this worthy lady." Mrs. Meanwell aſſured her Ladyſhip that both herſelf and her father were now ſo much accuſtomed to, and ſo happy in Miſs Rivers' company, which they had enjoyed near four months, that it would be with the utmoſt difficulty they could be prevailed on to part with her.

Louiſa

Louiſa thanked her friend in the moſt grateful and affectionate terms, and expreſſed the high ſenſe ſhe entertained of Lord and Lady Sweetland's obliging offer, yet begged leave to aſſure her that nothing ſhould ſeparate them, unleſs ſome event, as her Ladyſhip had obſerved, ſhould force her to the ſeparation. Then addreſſing herſelf to Lady Sweetland, made an offer of her ſervice (with Mrs. Meanwell's permiſſion) to viſit the young ladies whenever her Ladyſhip ſhould be under the neceſſity of leaving them, which was gratefully accepted by the noble maſter and miſtreſs of the manſion, who kindly begged Mrs. Meanwell would join with her friend in viſiting not only their children, but themſelves, whenever ſhe ſhould think proper to honour them with her company. The young ladies (of which there were two, Lady Maria, about twelve years of age, and Lady Emma, about ten, daughters of Lord and Lady Sweetland, and the only children

children they had, both amiable girls) now made their appearance, having been ſummoned by their mother, and ſhewed by their manner and behaviour the excellent education they had received from that beſt of women. Louiſa was charmed with them both; and finding they were taught muſic, entreated them to oblige her with a leſſon on the harpſichord, with which they immediately complied. After which, at the joint requeſt of the whole company, ſhe gave them ſuch a ſpecimen of her ſkill on that inſtrument as aſtoniſhed all preſent, although ſhe had not exerted her uſual powers, but kept within limits through natural modeſty, as likewiſe not being willing to eclipſe too much the performance of the lovely girls who had played before her; but as indifferent as ſhe thought it was, Lord and Lady Sweetland both affirmed they never had heard any thing to equal it.

The evening being now pretty far advanced, Mrs. Meanwell obſerved, that though

though ſhe was loath to take leave of Lord and Lady Sweetland, yet the hour, and her duty to her father, obliged her to think of returning home, if agreeable to Miſs Rivers, who immediately roſe from her ſeat, ſhewing ſuch attention to that lady in this, as in every thing elſe, as charmed both Lord and Lady Sweetland, who in a moſt amicable and kind manner ſolicited them to repeat their viſits as often as poſſible without any ceremony, as they in their turn would take the freedom of calling on them whenever inclination prompted them, and leiſure permitted it; which was promiſed on both ſides, and faithfully obſerved. This amiable party then ſeparated, each highly contented and ſatisfied with the other.

On their return home they found Dr. Meanwell rather low in ſpirits, on account of the indiſpoſition of his ſon, who had laboured under a pretty ſmart fever all the evening, yet could not be prevailed upon to retire. Louiſa, whoſe tenderneſs of heart was ever open to com-

paſſion

paſſion, ſaw, with infinite pain, his countenance fluſhed, his lips pale, and his eyes heavy, and ſunk into his head; and gueſſing ſhe was partly the cauſe of his indiſpoſition, lamented within herſelf her not being able to do ſomething to relieve the amiable youth who had done ſo much for her; and though her eyes announced her pity for him, and her ſorrow for her ſituation, yet ſhe did not dare to own that pity and that ſorrow which agitated her, in words, leſt he might be encouraged to ſuppoſe her compaſſion proceeded from another cauſe which would have been criminal in her to have led him in an error: but on his looking at her with eyes, in which love and reſpect were painted, her humanity got the better of her aſſumed reſerve, and with the moſt inexpreſſible ſweetneſs, entreated him to retire to his apartment, as reſt was the only remedy for his illneſs. "You muſt be obeyed, "Madam," replied he, with more chearfulneſs than he had been obſerved to have been

been poſſeſſed with during the evening; and after having wiſhed her, his father, and ſiſter a good night, retired immediately.

Our trio now remained rather dull, though each through a different motive; Dr. Meanwell, from ignorance of the cauſe of his ſon's indiſpoſition: his daughter, from the certainty of the cauſe, and her doubts of its ever being relieved by the object who had occaſioned it; and Louiſa from humanity, compaſſion, gratitude and inability to relieve him. Her eſteem and affection were too firmly fixed on the abſent Lord Belmont, of whom ſhe never had heard the leaſt ſyllable—and indeed how could ſhe hear from him? he himſelf being ignorant of her deſtiny, and ſuppoſed her ſtill at Florence, perſecuted by his uncle; though the high opinion he had conceived of her flattered him with the hopes of her fulfilling her engagement with him.—She never entertained the leaſt ſuſpicion of his want of

honour. The noble ſentiments ſhe knew him poſſeſſed with, his morals, his virtues, and the amiable character both Mrs. Meanwell and her brother had given her of him, all co-operated in favour of him, and cemented her unalterable affection and regard for him: his abſence therefore, and the improbability of hearing from him, cauſed her, notwithſtanding, many a ſevere pang; but ſhe ſighed in ſilence, ſtrictly adhering to the promiſe ſhe had given him.

But to return. Mrs. Meanwell, however, opened the converſation after the ſervants were withdrawn, by giving her father a circumſtantial account of their evening paſtime at Lord Sweetland's. The good old gentleman ſeemed highly delighted with the patronage and protection this worthy couple offered Miſs Rivers, not only on account of her own merit, which certainly claimed the attention of all who knew her, but alſo on account of the excellence of their diſpo-

ſition,

ſition, which diſplayed itſelf manifeſtly by their inclination to take care of a ſuppoſed diſtreſſed orphan, for whoſe long-loſt father their friendſhip, after near twenty years abſence, had not in the leaſt diminiſhed. "I ſhould, however, be ſorry," added he, addreſſing himſelf to Miſs Rivers, "ſhould they prevail on "you to prefer their ſociety to ours,"— "They have too much generoſity," interrupted Mrs. Meanwell, "ever to endea-"vour at it, unleſs by free conſent of all "parties concerned; and as to my friend "here, I am too well acquainted with "her candour and ſincerity to entertain "the leaſt doubt of her ſeparation "from us, merely through caprice or "love for variety." Louiſa kindly thanked them both for their repeated marks of friendſhip for her, which ſhe would endeavour to deſerve, by an implicit compliance to all they would requeſt of her, as far as her power permitted her. After little more agreeable converſation

with each other, they all retired to their reſpective apartments.

Louiſa no ſooner ſaw herſelf alone, than ſhe ſeriouſly meditated on the plan ſhe was to purſue. She ſaw but too plainly Mr. Meanwell's attachment for her had already deprived him of his health; his exceſſive modeſty in not declaring his ſentiments to her, impoſed a ſilence upon him which had all the appearance of being prejudicial to him; and although he was not naturally ſhy, and, from his family, fortune, and connections, would have done honour to any young lady by the offer of his hand, yet there was ſomething in the looks and behaviour of Miſs Rivers, (notwithſtanding her being exceedingly lively and chearful) which awed him with a kind of reverence, and took from him all power of opening his heart to her. Louiſa was but too ſenſible of the ſufferings this amiable young man felt for her, but had nothing to return him but pity. She

dreaded

dreaded leſt his ſiſter ſhould become his advocate, and, in that caſe, what was there left for her to do? To quit the houſe of Dr. Meanwell was the firſt neceſſary ſtep to be taken by her: but would not that appear like the blackeſt ingratitude, to quit thoſe friends, who, in every ſenſe of the word, had proved ſo in reality to her? Sure of any aſylum at Lord Sweetland's, yet could ſhe promiſe herſelf that ſolid ſatisfaction, and contented chearful life ſhe had experienced at her friend Meanwell's? In books, muſic, drawing, and a ſelect ſociety of ſenſible, agreeable perſons, her days had paſſed away ſince her arrival in England, always giving and receiving ſatisfaction. Was ſhe ſure to find in Lady Sweetland that unaffected piety, ſo eſſential to happineſs; that cordial and heart-binding friendſhip ſhe had ever met with in Mrs. Meanwell? On the other hand, ſhould ſhe remain in the family, how could ſhe reconcile ſuch a cir-

cumſtance with female delicacy? Beſides, would it not aggravate and augment young Mr. Meanwell's indiſpoſition, by having the object of his ſufferings continually before his eyes? "Unfortunate Mean-" well!" would ſhe cry out, "Why did "not ſacred friendſhip limit your ſenti-" ments for me?—But ſtill more unfortu-" nate Louiſa," added ſhe, "deſtined to "give pain, where from gratitude and "inclination ſhe ought to give the moſt "ſatisfaction."—At length, after mature deliberation, ſhe determined, ſhould either Mr. or Mrs. Meanwell acquaint her with his ſentiments, ſhe then would own to them her being engaged to another, as ſuch an avowal could not be looked upon as a breach of her promiſe to Lord Belmont, as long as ſhe concealed his name. And her rectitude of mind prompted her the more to it, as ſhe thought it but juſtice to Mr. Meanwell, in order to put a ſtop at once to his (perhaps) growing hopes. After this reſolution, ſhe felt herſelf

herſelf rather more compoſed, and ſleep having likewiſe befriended her, ſhe aroſe the following morning in tolerable good ſpirits. Mr. Meanwell breakfaſted with his father and the ladies, and appeared not quite ſo dejected as he had done the evening before. Lady Sweetland and her daughters called on them, and both Mrs. Meanwell and Louiſa accompanied them into Kenſington-gardens. From that time the ladies were ſcarcely ever aſunder at their leiſure hours, and frequently Dr. Meanwell and his ſon were of their party.

A whole month was now elapſed, during which, Mr. Meanwell's health and ſpirits ſo viſibly declined, as alarmed his father and ſiſter exceedingly. The latter, knowing the ſource from whence his dejection originated, interrogated him about it, and offered him all the ſervice in her power with Miſs Rivers; upon which he opened his heart to his ſiſter, and thanking her for her offered aſſiſtance, declared,

at the ſame time, he was ſure her interceſſion in his behalf would prove fruitleſs. For although Miſs Rivers honoured him with a ſincere friendſhip, yet as a lover ſhe would reject him. "I'll try "that, my dear brother," ſaid Mrs. Meanwell, "and till I bring you her re-"ſuſal of you, from herſelf, I beg you "will not deſpair. Should, on the other "hand, your ſuggeſtions prove true, "you muſt then, in your turn, exert "your utmoſt reaſon, and do all in your "power to regain your loſt health." Mrs. Meanwell then went up to Louiſa, who ſhe found in tears. That amiable young lady was hurt beyond expreſſion at the melancholy ſituation of Mr. Meanwell on her account, and her incapacity of contributing toward his recovery. Her friend, rather low in ſpirits herſelf, having aſked her the cauſe of her grief, and not receiving a ſatisfactory anſwer, ſaid, "My dear Miſs Rivers, I am come "at a very improper time, being myſelf

"a mourn-

" a mournful petitioner, and will take " another opportunity to mention my " ſuit, as I would, on no account what- " ever, add to your affliction."—" Speak, " my dear friend," replied Louiſa, " and " let not the fear of increaſing my grief " prevent your imparting your requeſt to " me. You ſay it is mournful—then let " us aſſociate in melancholy, by render- " ing it mutual."—Mrs. Meanwell then, after proper apologies, acquainted Louiſa with the ſtate of her brother's heart, his ſufferings, and his humility, which had hitherto proved a bar to the declaring of his ſentiments. Louiſa, in a flood of tears, interrupted her, and cried out, " Say no more, my dear Mrs. Meanwell, " I know it all." " What," replied her friend, with ſurprize, " did my brother " ever ſpeak to you on the ſubject?"— " Oh no," anſwered ſhe, " his looks, " his behaviour, and his ill ſtate of " health, have long informed me he che- " riſhed an hopeleſs paſſion, and that

" myſelf was the miſerable being that
" had inſpired him with it. Unfortunate
" young man," added ſhe, " would you
" had never ſeen me."—" You really
" aſtoniſh me, my dear Louiſa:—you
" ſpeak affectionately of my brother—
" you pity him—then what impediment
" prevents you making him happy?"
" A previous engagement with one of
" the worthieſt of mankind, amiable and
" virtuous like Mr. Meanwell. Forgive
" me, my dear friend, the having kept
" this a ſecret; it is the only circum-
" ſtance in my life I have ever hid from
" you, and for no other reaſon, than the
" not being authoriſed to reveal it. My
" happineſs, and that of the object in
" queſtion, depends entirely on its re-
" maining concealed, till ſuch time as he
" can aſſert his own right, and claim me
" publicly as his own. Your way of
" thinking is too noble to think meanly
" of me for the having depoſited this in
" no other breaſt but my own. And—"

" Think

"Think meanly of you, my dear Miſs "Rivers," interrupted Mrs. Meanwell, and embracing her moſt affectionately, "No—I eſteem and revere you the more "for it. Was it not prohibited your "communicating this precious tie and "bond of love and friendſhip? Then "what right could any one aſſume to be "entitled to the information of it? My "beſt thanks are due to your generoſity, "which I cannot ſufficiently admire, that "inſtead of letting my brother languiſh "as he hath done for ſome time, you, "when called upon to relieve him, at "once point out your impoſſibility of "effecting it. I will not even aſk the "name, or any circumſtance relating to "the eſtimable object of your attach-"ment, for eſtimable he muſt be whom "Miſs Rivers judges worthy of her af-"fections." Louiſa only thanked her with her eyes gliſtening with tears. Then ſaid, with a ſigh, "What can be done "for your poor brother?"—"My bro-

"ther

" ther has ſenſe, honour, and reaſon," replied Mrs. Meanwell, " and they muſt " be his guide, and aſſiſt him in tranſ- " planting his love for you, and in its " ſtead admit eſteem, and unfeigned " friendſhip. I will likewiſe propoſe, " with the approbation of my father (to " whom I ſhall impart the confidence " you have been ſo good as to place in " me), a journey to Bath, where I will " keep my brother, till ſuch time as I " find he is reconciled to his fate. Vari- " ety of objects (I will not ſay diſſipation " alone) have often been efficacious on " the minds of young men. You, in " the mean time, my dear, ſhall pay a " viſit to Lord and Lady Sweetland, " where you will reſide till my return " from Bath, when I hope I ſhall again " be favoured with your amiable com- " pany, if agreeable to your own incli- " nations, and that my brother can be- " hold you without danger to himſelf. " Sorry I am that I ſhall be compelled

" to

"to this excurſion without you. I could "wiſh never to be parted from you: but "your own repoſe, and my brother's "health, render it expedient to try what "abſence can operate." Louiſa, in her turn, aſſured Mrs. Meanwell of her unalterable friendſhip for her and family, and much approved of the ſcheme ſhe intended to put in execution. Agreeable to this reſolution, Mrs. Meanwell acquainted her father with her brother's ſituation, and with the converſation ſhe had had with Miſs Rivers relating to it. The Doctor was ſorry for his ſon, though not at all ſurpriſed he had placed his affections on an object ſo amiable and ſo deſerving. He entirely coincided with his daughter's plan of their going to Bath, eſpecially as he could confide in Lord and Lady Sweetland, where Miſs Rivers was to reſide during their abſence, and left the care and management of his ſon entirely to Mrs. Meanwell. As ſoon as ſhe entered her brother's apartment,

he

he preſaged from her looks no favourable tidings for him. And on having aſked her whether Miſs Rivers was offended with his preſumption, ſhe anſwered in the negative.—" But" added, " I will " not flatter you, my dear Tom; Miſs " Rivers eſteems you as her dear friend, " who has been her guardian angel, her " deliverer, and her protector. But"—and then pauſed—" I underſtand you," interrupted he, " I muſt not hope." His ſiſter then gave him an ample detail of what had paſſed between the young lady and herſelf, who, as ſhe ſaid, felt inexpreſſible ſorrow at her being the cauſe of his indiſpoſition; and expatiated largely on her ſtrict ſenſe of honour, which made her conſider herſelf as already married; acquainted him with the reſolution her father and herſelf had taken of accompanying him to Bath, where they hoped the change of air, objects, and amuſements, but, above all, his own judgment and reaſon would effectually co-operate, to

bring

bring him to a due reflection of what he owed to himself as a man of honour and probity, and to the young lady who generously had avowed her being neither mistress of her hand and heart, and who in order to restore him to his former tranquillity, had partly sacrificed a precious secret on which her future happiness in life depended. The melancholy youth fetched a deep sigh, and said, "Divided "from Miss Rivers, all climates are alike "to me. Lead me where you please, "and I'll follow you. Generous maid," added he, "do you honour me so far "with your compassion, as occasion your "tears to flow? Oh, pardon my aspiring "thoughts—ignorant of the situation of "your heart, I have fed and nourished a "flame which, I fear, will prove fatal to "my repose, though, I trust, not to "yours. Whatever efforts I can be mas-"ter of, I will employ to extinguish that "hopeless passion, to deserve that friend-"ship you so amicably offer. Nor will I

"return,

"return, or preſent myſelf before you,
"till I have gained a complete conqueſt
"over myſelf, and can behold you with
"reverence, eſteem, and reſpect." Then turning to his ſiſter, he ſaid, "Be as ex-
"peditious as you pleaſe with the prepa-
"rations for our journey, for the ſooner I
"leave London the better. Miſs Rivers,
"I ſuppoſe, retires to Lady Sweetland's.
"And happy I am ſhe has found ſo ho-
"nourable an aſylum, with ſuch worthy
"friends." Mrs. Meanwell anſwering in the affirmative, added, that the very afternoon her father and herſelf propoſed to ſet off with him for Windſor, in their way to Bath, and ſpend two or three days there, as it could not be very agreeable to him to paſs another night under the ſame roof with Miſs Rivers, circumſtanced as ſhe was. "I hope," interrupted he, "I may be permitted to take my leave
"of her"—"Undoubtedly," anſwered ſhe, "if you are not apprehenſive of in-
"creaſing your melancholy." "Nothing

"can

" can add to it," replied he, " as my exile " is voluntary." Louiſa was then informed of the ſucceſs Mrs. Meanwell had met with, relating to her brother's journey, and immediately wrote to Lady Sweetland, acquainting her, as Mr. Meanwell's indiſpoſition (of which ſhe was not ignorant, though ſhe was to the cauſe of it) required inſtant change of air; and having obtained permiſſion of Dr. and Mrs. Meanwell to paſs the few weeks of their abſence with her ladyſhip, ſhould it prove agreeable and convenient to her; ſhe therefore intended waiting on her that afternoon, as her friends propoſed to leave London about three o'clock. Lady Sweetland, overjoyed at the thoughts of having Louiſa with her, ſent an anſwer full of thanks at the preference ſhe gave her, and that ſhe would have the pleaſure of calling on her herſelf to conduct her to her houſe before dinner; and begged, in the mean time, ſhe would be ſo good as to order her trunks to be

made

made ready, as ſhe would ſend her chairmen to fetch them. Dr. Meanwell and his family were as much affected at their parting with Louiſa, as ſhe herſelf could poſſibly be, as ſhe had a real attachment to them all, excluſive of her gratitude for the many benevolent and kind actions ſhe had received from them. And having communicated Lady Sweetland's note to Mrs. Meanwell, ſhe adviſed her, that the inſtant her ladyſhip arrived, ſhe ſhould take that opportunity of taking leave of her father and brother, which ſhe obſerved—for the inſtant the carriage ſtopped, her friend conducted her firſt to the doctor, who embraced her with a father's affection, bleſſed her, and even dropped a tear as he expreſſed his wiſh of her returning again to them on their leaving Bath: which ſhe faithfully promiſed to do. Her parting from Mr. Meanwell, to whom her friend then led her, was one of the moſt mournful ſcenes that can be deſcribed. Few

words were employed on the occaſion, but mutual heart-piercing looks too well demonſtrated their ſympathiſing grief, though proceeding from different cauſes. The unfortunate youth advancing towards her, and reſpectfully kiſſing her hand, ſaid, "Your kind pardon, Madam, is all that "is now left me to hope for. May you "be happy as you deſerve! Say but you "forgive me, I'll endeavour to deſerve it." "My pardon, Mr. Meanwell," ſaid Louiſa, with a faultering voice and ſtreaming eye, "you ever had it! and if my con-"cern, affliction, and pity, for your ſitu-"ation could reſtore you to what you once "was, you would ſoon be happy." Mr. Meanwell bowed and ſighed. And his ſiſter judged a longer conference would prove prejudicial to him, led Louiſa out of the room and conducted her to Lady Sweetland, who was in the drawing-room converſing with Dr. Meanwell, waiting the arrival of the ladies. That lady was a little ſurpriſed at the dejected counte-

nance

nance of Louiſa, which her red and ſwoll'n eyes but too much demonſtrated; but ſoon aſcribed it to the exceſſive ſenſibility of her heart, which felt ſeverely at the parting from dear and reſpectable friends, eſpecially as their ſeparation was occaſioned by the indiſpoſition of a worthy young man, deſervingly the object of his father and ſiſter's tenderneſs, and of her eſteem.

Dr. Meanwell taking Louiſa affectionately by the hand, and preſenting her to Lady Sweetland, ſaid, "Madam, I here "deliver you up a treaſure, which no-"thing but a parent's claim and my ſon's "illneſs could have induced me to part "from: but ſure of her ſafety under "your protection, I am happy to leave "her in ſuch worthy hands. I muſt, how-"ever, take the liberty to add, that "on our return from Bath, I ſhall hope "you will make no difficulty of reſtoring "her to the arms of thoſe who now, with "the utmoſt regret and reluctance, leave "her behind them; flattering myſelf, in

"the

" the mean time, this beloved child will " not alienate her affection from us, but " return to us with that chearfulneſs and " ſatisfaction as her ſeparation from us " now cauſes us pain.

Lady Sweetland without heſitation aſſented to his requeſt, as being both equitable and reaſonable. Poor Louiſa only anſwered with looks of gratitude and acquieſcence. The Doctor then embracing her with a paternal affection, ſaid, " Heaven bleſs you, my child; be good, " and happy." Mrs. Meanwell then approaching, embraced her, but unable to ſpeak, hung on her neck, and in ſilent grief bid her adieu. Louiſa, in dumb but elegant affliction, returned her friend's farewell, and, conducted by the good Doctor, who had not quitted her hand, ſtepped into the carriage, where Lady Sweetland followed her; they drove off without much converſation on either ſide, as that lady reſpected her young friend's affliction too much to diſturb her indulgence of it too ſoon.

Arriving

Arriving in Portman-ſquare, Lord Sweetland received Louiſa with the affection of a father. The young ladies likewiſe teſtified their ſatisfaction at ſeeing her, by every friendly look and complacency in their power. A few ſelect friends of Lord and Lady Sweetland's dined there that day, all deſiring to ſee Miſs Rivers, of whom every one had heard, but few had ſeen; and ſhe, as uſual, charmed the whole company. Invitations on all ſides were given her, which ſhe accepted in ſuch a manner, as did her infinite honour. In ſhort, after a few days reſidence at Lord Sweetland's, ſhe became the idol of that nobleman and his lady, and was beloved by their children, to whom ſhe acted the part of a governante whenever their mother was abſent; ſhe likewiſe accompanied that lady in her viſits, and was even privately introduced to their Majeſties, who had deſired to ſee her, ſhe having declined the being publicly preſented at St. James's. The ſatisfaction

with

with which ſhe was received every where; the praiſes ſhe heard from all mouths of her worthy father; the favourable news ſhe had from Bath, as ſhe conſtantly correſponded with Mrs. Meanwell, whoſe brother did all in his power to regain his ſerenity of mind; and the conſtant good tidings ſhe had from her dear Mrs. Pianelli, ſoon reinſtated her in her former health and accuſtomed flow of ſpirits, which added ſuch a luſtre to her beauty, as few could behold with tranquillity.

Being now upon the moſt intimate footing with Lady Sweetland, as heretofore ſhe had been with the unfortunate Madame de Polignac, having few ſecrets uncommunicated to each other, her friend aſked her one morning, what it was that had occaſioned her exceſſive affliction at her leaving Dr. Meanwell and family?

Louiſa bluſhed like ſcarlet at this queſtion; its coming quite unexpected, made her incapable of giving a direct reply; and betraying by her countenance what

ſhe

ſhe for ever wiſhed to conceal, made Lady Sweetland immediately conjecture that ſomething more than tranquil placid friendſhip could occaſion the emotion in her friend's looks, and ſaid, laughing, "I'll engage young Meanwell was ena-"moured of you, and you proved cruel. Lord Sweetland," continued ſhe, "hath "made the obſervation more than once; "that whenever the young gentleman "was in your company, you alone were "the object of his attention."

Louiſa having recovered a little from her ſurpriſe, ſaid, "I hope, Lady Sweet-"land, you will believe me when I aſſure "you, that I have been exceedingly "unhappy on that account, as Mr. Mean-"well deſerves to be happy in every "ſenſe of the word; and though I had "determined the cauſe of his indiſpoſi-"tion ſhould never have eſcaped my lips, "yet as I find you are partly informed "of it from Lord Sweetland's obſerva-"tions, and unaccuſtomed to diſguiſe the

"truth

" truth by an evaſive anſwer, I am willing
" to give you every information in my
" power relating to that circumſtance,
" truſting it will be as ſecretly depoſited
" in your breaſt as hitherto it has been
" concealed in mine."—

Upon which Louiſa gave her friend a faithful detail of the whole, not even omitting her previous engagement with another, ſolely reſerving to herſelf the name and quality of the beloved object.

" Generous girl!" ſaid Lady Sweetland, as Louiſa had done ſpeaking, and was wiping off a trickling tear that was ready to drop, " your tender ſentiments
" are a glory to you. Unhappy Meanwell!
" would another object, diſengaged and
" deſerving, had attracted you, and then
" you might have been happy; however,
" his good ſenſe, joined to the impoſſibi-
" lity of obtaining you, will, I doubt
" not, in due time reſtore him to his ac-
" cuſtomed tranquillity, difficult as it is
" to be diveſted from an attachment to

" ſuch ſuperior merit as your's. I muſt, in
" my turn," continued ſhe, " now reveal
" a ſecret to you, which would not long
" have remained one, as you are the
" principal perſon concerned to be in-
" formed of it, and I am glad our con-
" verſation has paved the way towards my
" acquainting you with it. Lord Mel-
" moth, who ſometimes viſits here, and
" who has frequently ſeen you at church,
" at the opera, and amongſt the circle of
" my acquaintance, is deeply ſmitten
" with you, and aſpires to form a connec-
" tion for life with you. As he viſits
" now and then at your uncle's, he has
" made many inquiries about you, but
" not receiving any ſatisfactory anſwer
" from thoſe ſavages, he has taken Lord
" Sweetland to taſk, and being deſirous
" to know whether your mind was as
" excellent as your form is beautiful, has
" aſked him a thouſand queſtions con-
" cerning you. You may be aſſured that
" my Lord has drawn your picture with-

" out

" out any flattery. The next queſtion
" then was, whether you were diſen-
" gaged with regard to your affections,
" as in that caſe he would have the
" honour of making you the formidable
" propoſal of becoming your lord and
" huſband. My good unſuſpecting Lord,
" having formed an idea from your uni-
" form behaviour and manner to all men
" who ſtrive to gain your good graces,
" and reckoning without his hoſt, an-
" ſwered in the negative. Upon which
" his Lordſhip aſked permiſſion to viſit
" you on his return from Berkſhire, where
" he has a very good eſtate, which he is
" daily improving, and is gone there now
" for a few days only to inſpect a planta-
" tion, his preſence being requeſted by his
" ſteward on that account. I need not
" enumerate his good qualities by way
" of recommendation; but to acquit my-
" ſelf of my promiſe to Lord Sweetland,
" I am to add, his perſon is handſome, but
" that you know already; his morals un-

" tainted, and his family and fortune
" noble: but, my ſweet girl, your being
" engaged, and beyond all doubt to a
" deſerving object, makes all pleadings
" in favour of another needleſs; nor
" need you fear to hear any more of Lord
" Melmoth either from me or Lord
" Sweetland."

Louiſa thanked her kindly for the information, as it enabled her to put a ſtop to his growing hopes, having for ſome time perceived his remarkable diſtinction of her in preference to other ladies; and underſtanding from Mrs. Chatwell, his Lordſhip intended to ſolicit her hand at the enſuing ball of Lady Springwood's, ſhe would now beg the favour that Lord Sweetland would do her the honour of becoming her partner that evening, as ſhe would thereby prevent any converſation with Lord Melmoth, which dancing for ſo many hours with the ſame perſon (as that was to be the etiquette there) frequently favours. Lady Sweetland commended her

her diſcretion, and ſaid, laughing, "Could "you not have fixed on any other except "my Lord? Who knows but I ſhall be "jealous?"——"When that ſhall prove "the caſe," ſaid Louiſa in the ſame joking ſtyle, "only acquaint me with it, and "I'll immediately change my partner."

This important point being ſettled, Lord Melmoth on his return being informed by his friend of Louiſa's ſituation, gave her no farther uneaſineſs; he being a man of ſtrict honour, and looking upon her engagement as ſacred, he regretted his diſappointment, but bore it with patience.

Thus Louiſa continued happy, in enjoying the friendſhip of Lord and Lady Sweetland, and the eſteem of all who knew her; ſhe had likewiſe the ſatisfaction of hearing good accounts from Mrs. Meanwell, who with her father and brother were ſet off for the ſouth of France; the Doctor having an inclination to ſee that part of the continent, as well for his

own amuſement, as for the entire recovery of his ſon's health, who was much better than what they had expected him to have been.

The fourteen months being now elapſed which were to render Lord Belmont maſter of his perſon and fortune, and Louiſa not hearing the leaſt ſyllable about him, began to be uneaſy and penſive; her ſpirits likewiſe forſook her, and the roſes on her cheeks daily loſt their bloom: though ſhe uſed every effort in her power to appear chearful, by joining in all the amuſements of dancing and muſic.

Lady Sweetland, ever attentive to what concerned her, ſaw with regret this change in her favourite, and gueſſing at the cauſe, propoſed a tour to Brighthelmſtone, being certain the company, and the ſalubrity of the air, would have a good effect upon her; and Louiſa, always ready to comply with her friend's requeſts, immediately agreed to the putting it in execution. Lord Sweetland, Lady Maria,

and

and Lady Emma were to be of the party. It being now the night ſeaſon for aſſembling at the faſhionable place, the neceſſary preparations were ſoon accompliſhed, and our amiable party ſet off the very day Louiſa had completed her nineteenth year. When they arrived at Brighthelmſtone, the beauty of Louiſa attracted the eyes of all beholders; and the firſt time of her appearance at the ball brought ſuch a concourſe of company into the ball-room, that the dancers had ſcarce ſpace left to dance in: however, when ſhe was called upon for the minuet, a place was procured, that ſhe might not be impeded in her ſteps, and ſuch an univerſal ſilence was obſerved, and ſuch repeated expreſſions of admiration were heard throughout the whole aſſembly when ſhe had finiſhed, as demonſtrated but too well that ſhe excelled all there preſent. The cotillons and country dances ſhe acquitted herſelf of with the ſame eaſe and elegance as in her minuet. All eyes were

fixed upon her, and every tongue ſeemed ready to ſpeak her praiſe. The attention of the company towards her created the moſt amiable confuſion in her looks, and the animation of her ſpirits by dancing, both together made her appear more beautiful than ever.

Among the number of thoſe who contemplated her in ſilence, was a middle-aged gentleman, of an elegant figure, and a countenance on which benevolence and benignity pourtrayed; though ſome ſhades of ſorrow had dared to attack, and at times appeared to have clouded the brightneſs of his eyes, from which humanity and good humour beamed forth inceſſantly. As the room was exceedingly crowded, her partner with ſome difficulty conducted her to a ſeat juſt where the above-mentioned gentleman was ſtanding, who teſtified great ſatisfaction in his looks at his being ſo near her; and though he hardly ever withdrew his eyes from her, yet it was with ſuch modeſty and humility,

lity, that Louiſa could not be offended, his manner of contemplating her being ſo different to that of Lord Croſslove's on a ſimilar occaſion at Florence: nay, ſhe ſeemed rather to take pleaſure in his attention towards her; and her partner being called away, ſhe offered the vacant ſeat to the amiable ſtranger, as ſuppoſing him tired of ſtanding, which he accepted with every mark of contentment. He made an eſſay of entering into converſation with her, but ſeemed at a loſs for words how to addreſs her; but whenever he did ſpeak to her, the anſwers ſhe gave him charmed him beyond expreſſion, and an unſpeakable inward ſatisfaction diffuſed itſelf over his countenance. Lady Sweetland and her daughters joined her, which prevented his continuing the attempted converſation. He immediately roſe from his ſeat, offering it to that lady, and lamented it was not in his power to procure chairs for the two young ladies with her. She thanked him in the moſt

polite manner, but begged he would excuſe her accepting of it, ſhe having been ſeated almoſt all the evening, and had obſerved him all that time deprived of a ſeat; as to the children, they had juſt engaged themſelves to join in the cotillon, which after being finiſhed would make a chair very acceptable to them: the ſtranger, however, kept ſtanding, which induced Lady Sweetland to ſit down next to Louiſa, of whom ſhe aſked, who was that amiable man ſhe had been chatting with. "A new lover," added ſhe, "I'll give you my word."—"I "ſhould be heartily ſorry ſhould that "prove the caſe," replied Louiſa; "and "infinitely more ſo than I was on Mr. "Meanwell's account: and for once, I "dare aver, your Ladyſhip is miſtaken, "as he hath not addreſſed me either with "a lover's look or ſpeech, but with an "air infinitely more intereſting and "agreeable to my mind. He is a perfect "ſtranger here, I perceive, as I have not "obſerved his ſpeaking to any one in the "company

" company beſides myſelf; nor hath any
" one here vouchſafed to enter into con-
" verſation with him, which, if he is a
" foreigner, as I think his accent be-
" ſpeaks him, muſt give him but a very
" indifferent opinion of Engliſh urbani-
" ty."—" So warm in his behalf, my
" dear, looks ſuſpicious," ſaid Lady
Sweetland, ſmiling. "Nay, my dear
" friend," replied Louiſa, "no joking, I
" beg. I muſt repeat it, he does not
" look upon me with the eyes of a lover,
" and it would hurt me beyond expreſſion
" ſhould your words prove true; but
" your partiality for me makes you fancy
" that moſt men are my admirers."—
" They undoubtedly are ſo," replied
Lady Sweetland: " but here is your
" partner," continued ſhe; " are you
" diſpoſed for another cotillon, and then,
" if you pleaſe, we will retire."—
" Whenever you think proper," anſwer-
ed Louiſa, looking at her watch; " it is
" now near twelve o'clock, and I had

" better

" better not begin another dance." Her partner then earneſtly entreated her, ſhe would honour him with one more dance, and Lady Sweetland likewiſe begging ſhe would oblige him, ſhe once more joined the jovial train, and as before charmed the whole aſſembly. Lady Sweetland was very deſirous to have had a little converſation with the ſtranger, but his attention was ſo entirely fixed on Louiſa, while ſhe was dancing, and as there were ſeveral perſons between herſelf and him, ſhe found it impoſſible to accompliſh her deſign.

The cotillon over, Louiſa was conducted by her partner to where ſhe was ſeated, and her daughters likewiſe coming to her, ſhe begged one of the gentlemen to be ſo kind to call her carriage, intending, after they had reſted a little, to return home, which accordingly ſhe did ſoon after, being conducted to her coach, as well as Louiſa, and her children, each by a cavalier, to the great mortifi-

mortification of the ſtranger, who would fain have had that honour, as his looks proclaimed it but too well, but the croud between the charming Louiſa and himſelf prevented his approaching her. Lady Sweetland and herſelf looked at him, however, as apologiſing for their abrupt departure, and he, taking it in that ſenſe, bowed moſt reſpectfully to them both, as acknowledging their intended civility. After they were gone, he became reſtleſs, malancholy, and impatient to know who this beautiful creature could be, for whom he found himſelf ſo much intereſted, and who had thus captivated, and gained the hearts of the whole company. And unacquainted as he was with, and to every one there, he determined to aſk the perſon who ſtood near him for ſome information about her. Unfortunately, the perſon to whom he addreſſed himſelf, knew nothing concerning her, but that ſhe was the moſt beautiful perſon upon earth. A ſecond, not much better inſtructed,

ſtructed, ſaid her name was Meanwell, and that ſhe was the daughter of a clergyman. A third and fourth ſaid ſhe was the daughter of Lord Sweetland, and the ladies who accompanied her, were her mother and her ſiſters. Another again affirmed her to be only a relation of Lord Sweetland's and not his daughter. The ſtranger, overjoyed at the name of Lord Sweetland, exclaimed in raptures—"Is "his Lordſhip here? I much wiſh to ſee "him, he was my intimate friend twenty "years ago." This exclamation, and the tone of voice with which it was uttered, drew upon him the attention of ſeveral gentlemen who before had not noticed him, and judging from his manner and behaviour that he was a gentleman, and from his dreſs, which although plain, but exceedingly neat, that he was a man of fortune, gave him all the information in their power relating to Lord Sweetland's habitation in London, as well as to the houſe he then occupied at Brighton.

The

The ſtranger thanked them in the moſt polite terms, and not finding any thing remaining, after Louiſa's departure, that engaged his attention, ſoon after repaired to his own lodgings. My reader hath undoubtedly already gueſſed who this amiable ſtranger could be, to whom Louiſa had been ſo particularly attentive, contrary to her accuſtomed behaviour to men in general. But leſt he ſhould not, I have the pleaſure to inform him, that it was no other than our long-loſt worthy, and heretofore unfortunate Captain Rivers; who being freed from ſlavery, after near thirteen years captivity, was reſtored to his country, to his friends, and to his darling daughter, with a princely fortune. But as I am not willing to anticipate too much the joy every benevolent mind muſt feel at the deliverance of the moſt amiable of men from ſufferings and almoſt unparallelled hardſhips, but lead them on by degrees, from his calamities, to the height of happineſs he had to hope for

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in this world, ſo I will likewiſe proceed, in proper order, to inform my reader, how and in what manner he was conducted thither, and am of opinion they will join with me, when I conclude he was led there by an all-ruling Providence. It is alſo neceſſary I ſhould ſtep back and bring our ſecond hero, our amiable Lord Belmont upon the ſtage, as his circumſtances were now ſo connected with thoſe of Captain Rivers, that I cannot well name the one without making mention of the other. That unfortunate young nobleman had borne his exile into Switzerland with a religious patience. The laſt time we ſpoke of him was when he was at Bologna, on his journey he knew not whither, and his writing to Louiſa in the garden with a pencil, unſuſpected by his uncle, to whom he pretended marking the names of ſhrubs, plants, &c. which note he gave to the poſtillion, who faithfully delivered it to Miſs Rivers. From that time, he never heard the leaſt

ſyllable

ſyllable relating to the object of his eſteem, and moſt tender affection. Not even his mother, who had frequently written to him during his abſence, ever mentioned her name, or that of Madame de Polignac. Such a marked taciturnity, if I may ſo call an obſtinate ſilence on a ſubject, to all appearance indifferent to him, (as he never had avowed to any one living his attachment for Louiſa, herſelf and the Marchioneſs only excepted) made him extremely cautious in what he wrote, and he deſignedly totally omitted their names. Truſting entirely to Louiſa's honour, her apparent inclination towards him, and to Madame de Polignac's friendſhip and promiſed good offices in his behalf. Often did he call to mind and ponder upon the words of his beloved Louiſa, that ſhe owed him a confidence. What could it mean? That ſhe was not of that country, neither a relation of thoſe noble perſonages with whom ſhe reſided, but entirely dependant on their friend-

ſhip.

ſhip. Of an honourable family ſhe was, the Marchioneſs had aſſured him. She might not have been a Florentine, but of French extraction, perhaps. That ſhe was beautiful and lovely, his eyes had told him the firſt time he had ever beheld her, and his heart aſſured him ſhe was poſſeſſed of every virtue a human mind could be bleſſed with. What then could be the ſecret ſhe wiſhed to have imparted to him? This perplexed him at times very much, and made him uneaſy, as he was totally incapable of forming any conjecture of what nature the ſecret could be. Sometimes he fancied that either her father, uncle, or brother, or any other relation of hers, had, through a miſguided conduct, come to an untimely or ignominious end. But then, ſuppoſing it ſo, could ſhe help it, and was ſhe anſwerable for errors or crimes committed by her parents? Oh, no—would he ſay to himſelf: there is even cruelty in the ſuggeſtion of ſuch a thought. Sometimes

times he would ſuppoſe one thing, and ſometimes another, with regard to this ſecret, but always exculpated her, and ever concluded with, let it be what it would, ſhe was eſſential to his happineſs, which never could exiſt without her becoming his for life. Thus did he paſs fourteen tedious months at Geneva, and other parts of Switzerland, cultivating and improving his mind to the utmoſt of his power: ſoothing and relieving his melancholy at times, by the reliance he had on the word of his beloved miſtreſs, and with the flattering hopes, that his abſence was no leſs painful to her than his exile proved to him; till the happy day arrived on which he completed his twenty-ſixth year, on which day his father's will was accompliſhed, his dependance on his tyrannical uncle terminated, and he found himſelf maſter of a princely fortune, and of all his actions. How glorious did that period appear to him! And with what earneſt ſolicitude did he

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order every neceſſary preparation for his departure from Geneva—and what ſatisfaction did he not promiſe himſelf, when arrived at Florence, to lay his hand, heart and fortune, at the feet of his charming, timid, and bluſhing bride, who, he flattered himſelf, would not any longer oppoſe his happineſs, but, without reluctance, receive his hand, and become his for ever. He received on that very day a letter of congratulation of the agent Lord Croſslove had employed in the management of the eſtates, which were now become his, acquainting him with having a large ſum of money in his hands, and requeſted his orders (being now his own maſter) how, or in what manner he choſe it ſhould be employed. Lord Belmont having anſwered this letter, and ſettled every other affair, to the ſatisfaction of all with whom he had been connected, left Geneva, and purſuing his journey to Florence, with all imaginable expedition, where, however,

ver, he no ſooner arrived, but all his hopes of promiſed happineſs were at once daſhed to the ground by the heart-breaking information he received, of the loſs of the beloved of his ſoul, at leaſt of her departure from that place to ſome unknown region, and of the melancholy cataſtrophe of the unfortunate Marquis de Polignac, and his ſtill more unfortunate wife. The landlord of the inn who gave him this information (for Lord Belmont had preferred going to an inn, previous to his preſenting himſelf before his mother and uncle, in order to be acquainted a little with what had paſſed during his abſence from Florence) being a communicative man, gave him likewiſe an ample detail of Lord Croſslove's perſecution of Mademoiſelle de Polignac (as Louiſa was frequently called, and ſome who had heard her real name, through an erroneous pronunciation both in France and in Italy, called her Mademoiſelle Reverſe,

Reverſe, inſtead of Rivers, which occaſioned Lord Belmont to be ignorant of the reality of her family name, time not having permitted him to have had that intelligence from herſelf; and he imagined ſhe might have been a Mademoiſelle de Polignac, although not related to the Marquis's family). The landlord continued his narration—and how, in his purſuit of her, he (Lord Croſslove) had had a fall from his horſe, and had broken his leg, which had confined him to his apartment for near five months; and which accident having occaſioned his being lame, and the loſs of the lady, had rendered him infinitely more ſurly and ill-tempered than he had ever been before. The unhappy Belmont ſtood unmoved, like a ſtatue, at this recital. At laſt he exclaimed, "Don't talk to me of Lord "Croſslove—would to heaven he had "broke his neck inſtead of his leg! Tell "me, to what place is it ſuppoſed Ma-"demoiſelle is fled to—for fly away ſhe "did

" did from my cruel perſecuting uncle—
" and who accompanied her?"—" To
" Great Britain it is conjectured," replied the landlord; " but Signor Phar-
" mace, the ſurgeon, who reſcued the
" lady from out of Lord Croſslove's
" hands, can give you ample informati-
" on about it." " Let him be ſent for," ſaid Lord Belmont. Signor Pharmace inſtantly appeared, and acquainted his Lordſhip with every circumſtance of that event, as far as within his knowledge: as Mr. Meanwell had not exactly told Pharmace the place of their deſtination, but had (through fear of Lord Croſslove's purſuing her to England) mentioned Ireland as the wiſhed-for ſpot. And when aſked by Lord Belmont, who it was that had accompanied her thither? he anſwered, a Mr. Meenel, inſtead of Meanwell, from the ſimilitude of the ſound (he never having ſeen the name written), a clergyman of the Anglicane Church, who, with his ſiſter, had taken all imaginable

ginable care of her: but he unfortunately forgot the mentioning of Mr. de Bonfoi, the brother of the late unfortunate Marchioneſs de Polignac, who was the principal actor at that time in the family; if he had, Lord Belmont would have immediately ſet off for Paris, where he would have been informed of all his heart wiſhed for. But Pharmace naming only Mr. Meanwell, as the acting agent, and his having beſides but a very imperfect knowledge of the Marquis's family or connections, he confined his information merely to what had been executed and tranſacted by Mr. Meanwell. Lord Belmont thanked his ſtars that his amiable bride had eſcaped Lord Croſslove's fury, and that ſhe was protected by ſome of his country people, eſpecially a clergyman, which character he had ever revered, and reſolved to ſet off for Ireland, after having paid his duty to his mother; as to his uncle he did not think him entitled to any. Accordingly, he waited

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on Lady Belmont, who received him with open arms, and ſcarce had he received her careſſes, when Lord Croſslove came hobbling into the room, and addreſſed him with a—" Well, George! " are you come to fulfil your engage- " ment with Miſs Dupeley?"—" I am " not accountable for my actions now to " your Lordſhip," anſwered he: " your " tyrannical deſpotic power over me " hath ceaſed. I will, however, give " you one ſatisfaction, which is, that I " never was engaged, either in words, " or intention, to Miſs Dupeley, which " that lady will do me the juſtice to con- " firm."—" The world is of another " opinion," replied the young lady, " it " has always been ſuppoſed I was re- " ſerved for you."—" Reſerved for me!" aſked he with emotion—" It was my mo- " ther's wiſh," continued he, " I ſhould " attach myſelf to you, but I muſt take " the liberty to aſſure you, it has never " been in my power to comply with her

" requeſt—ſenſible we were never born
" for each other; nor can you accuſe
" me of having ever given you the moſt
" minute reaſon to ſuppoſe I had any
" other ſentiment for you than thoſe of
" common civility, which all men owe
" to your ſex: and as my relation, and
" out of reſpect to my mother, you cer-
" tainly was entitled to politeneſs on my
" part (which I have fulfilled), but not
" to my attachment."—" And can you
" be ſuch a ſcoundrel," ſaid Lord Croſs-
love, " to deceive a young woman in
" ſuch a manner, after having nouriſhed
" the warmeſt hopes of becoming Lady
" Belmont?"—" Your lordſhip may
" ſpare your epithets," replied he,
" you never had a right to make uſe of
" them, but now leſs than ever. Is it
" my fault if this young lady hath de-
" luded herſelf with falſe hopes of be-
" coming my wife? What right had ſhe
" to expect it?"—" Your mother's ſanc-
" tion, and your total ſilence to the con-
" trary,"

" trary," replied Miſs Dupeley.—" My " mother I love and eſteem," replied Lord Belmont, " but all my filial reſpect " and obedience to her does not empow- " er her to the compelling my inclinati- " ons. Herſelf can witneſs, I never " gave ſo much as an aſſenting look to " her propoſal."—" Nor a denying one," interrupted Miſs Dupeley.—" My reſpect " for Lady Belmont," anſwered his Lordſhip, " joined to my unwillingneſs " of mortifying any lady with a flat de- " nial of her, prevented my anſwering " her in the negative. As her wiſhes, " on that head, were generally uttered " in your preſence, I limited my replies " conſtantly to the uncertainty of what " my inclination might lead me to, when " once my own maſter; but that hither- " to I had never felt the leaſt propenſity " to the forming of a ſerious connection. " And this before a woman of ſenſe, in- " dicated a ſufficient refuſal of her per- " ſon." Lady Belmont confirmed, that

her ſon had never given her the leaſt hopes of his marrying her niece; but that ſhe had flattered herſelf he might have been induced to it, by kind entreaties, and by a different behaviour from that Miſs Dupeley had now aſſumed; which, inſtead of creating an affection in the breaſt of her ſon towards her, ſerved to extinguiſh it totally, if any ſuch had ever exiſted. But ſince ſhe found him averſe to her wiſhes, ſhe deſired the ſubject might be dropped entirely, he being his own maſter now, and certainly had a right to act as he pleaſed. Lord Belmont bowed, and Miſs Dupeley, in a vociferous and diſappointed tone of voice, cried out, as ſhe roſe to leave the room, "You have uſed me baſely—you and "your unworthy ſon, Lady Belmont."—"I'll talk to you by and by, Miſs," ſaid that lady to her, "and you do well to "quit the apartment, thereby prevent-"ingm y ordering you to do it."—"I "ſee well enough how it is," cried Lord Croſslove,

Croſslove, "he has a mind to run after "the French girl, but I'll diſappoint "your hopes there: and I'll take care "ſhe never comes into your clutches."— "I deſpiſe your menaces," ſaid Lord Belmont, "and it is out of reſpect for "my deceaſed father, that I do not add, "his brother is below my contempt. I "only requeſt of you to deliver me up "the deeds which confirm my right and "title to my father's eſtates." Lord Croſslove, without anſwering a word, rang the bell, and ordered a ſmall ſtrong box to be brought in, which he opened, and giving Lord Belmont the requeſted parchments, added, "Chargewell, the "attorney, has the others. Here, "young man, you will find every thing "fair and honeſt, as I was not willing to "have a halter put about my neck by a "jackanapes of a nephew, which he "undoubtedly would have done, had I "defrauded him but of a ſingle ſhilling." Then throwing the key of the box on

the table, ſaid, " May you ſpend it as " faſt as I have taken pains to augment " and ſave it for you!" Lord Belmont made no reply to this ill-natured expreſſion; but, on the contrary, thanked his Lordſhip for his care, and hoped he ſhould never have any reaſon to reproach him with ſuch a glaring want of conduct.

Lord Croſslove then left the room, in order to condole with and conſole the diſappointed Dupeley. Lady Belmont took that opportunity of informing her ſon of all that had happened to the late Marquis and Madame de Polignac; and confirmed what he already knew from Pharmace relating to Miſs Rivers, of her departure for Ireland with an Engliſh clergyman and his ſiſter, both agreeable, ſenſible, and well-bred people, ſhe ſaid, having ſeen them with Mademoiſelle on her viſit of condolance to her, but had forgot their name. There was an unaccountable fatality attending the name of Mr. de Bonfoi, brother to the deceaſed

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Marchioneſs, as Lady Belmont, as well as Mr. Pharmace, totally forgot mentioning him, ſpeaking only of Mr. Meanwell, as the acting perſon there. Lord Belmont having inquired of her how long ſhe intended ſtaying at Florence—" I have no " inclination as yet," anſwered ſhe, " to " return to England; and the leſs ſo, as " I expect many of my acquaintance " here, who propoſe to accompany me " to Rome, after we ſhall have ſeen all " that is remarkable between this place " and that ancient famous city. Lord " Croſslove, however, talks of leaving " Florence next week, and to reſide for " a few months in the ſouth of France, " previous to his return to England. As " to you, my dear," continued ſhe, " I " ſuppoſe you will go to London as ſoon " as poſſible, in order to inſpect and examine your affairs there."—" It is my " intention, Madam," anſwered he, " to " leave Florence in three days at fartheſt, " as neither Lord Croſslove or Miſs

"Dupeley can be very well pleaſed with "my preſence."——"I ſhall be ſorry to "loſe you ſo ſoon," ſaid ſhe, "but hope "when my tour through Italy ſhall be "finiſhed, I ſhall enjoy your company at "home." Some company coming in, prevented their farther converſation; and during the few days he remained there, Lady Belmont never mentioned Miſs Rivers to him, or ever aſked him whether he would endeavour to find her; knowing her ſon's delicacy too well, either in refuſing to anſwer her queſtions, or by an evaſive anſwer conceal the truth of his intentions.

The appointed day for his departure being come, he took an affectionate leave of Lady Belmont, and a reſpectful one of Lord Croſslove, who was ſulky and ill-humoured, not having exchanged a word with him ſince their firſt meeting, which had been deſcribed. As to Miſs Dupeley, ſhe had continually ſhunned him, and had actually hid herſelf at his leav-

leaving the houſe, telling Lord Croſslove that he ſhould not have the honour of bidding her adieu.

Our hopeleſs and melancholy Lord Belmont hurried out of Italy with as much precipitation as he had entered it, when buoyed up with the pleaſing hopes of meeting his beloved there, and arriving at Calais, was detained there by contrary winds, and in his ſolitary walks frequently met with a gentleman of a noble aſpect and a pleaſing countenance, but who appeared as ſolitary as himſelf.

As ſorrow attracts and communicates itſelf to benevolent minds, ſo each ſtranger ſeemed ſenſible of, and commiſerated by their looks the apparent affliction of the other. Two minds ſo ſimilar in humanity, and every other virtue, could not be long before mutual offers of ſervice were tendered and accepted; and reſiding both at Mr. Deſſein's, the principal inn at Calais, they ſoon acquainted each other with their name, family, and connections,

as likewiſe with every circumſtance relating to themſelves, and what had occaſioned their reſpective diſtreſs.

It is not at all difficult for the reader to gueſs, that this noble ſtranger Lord Belmont met with, was our amiable Capt. Rivers, who I have now brought a ſecond time upon the ſtage without entering into a detail of his long ſufferings, and his happy deliverance; but intent with all due expedition to ſatisfy all thoſe who, like me, rejoice in his recovered liberty, health, and wealth.

Capt. Rivers was perfectly well acquainted with Lord Belmont's family in England, although he was not with his Lordſhip, whoſe tender age, at the time he quitted London for Dublin, had left him as yet unnoticed to thoſe advanced in riper years; nor was the Captain's family unknown to Lord Belmont, having been at Eaton ſchool with the two eldeſt ſons of Earl Rivers, of whom he could not, however, give the moſt favourable

vourable account to their uncle. This mutual knowledge, and the ſimilitude of their ſorrow, rendered them infinitely dear to each other; and though the one was in purſuit of a long-loſt amiable daughter, and the other of a tenderly beloved miſtreſs, which being but one and the ſame object, yet there was ſuch an obſcurity, ſuch a veil drawn over every circumſtance relating to Miſs Rivers, that it was impoſſible either of them could imagine that the daughter and the bride were but one perſon. The difference of the country of which he ſuppoſed her to be a native, alone deſtroyed the probability of ſuch a ſuggeſtion. Lord Belmont's affairs compelled him to come to England before he could ſet off for Ireland. Captain Rivers returned from Ireland, and likewiſe from France, in ſearch of his dear child, but ſhe was not to be found in either kingdom. His determination then was to travel firſt all over England; and ſhould that ſearch prove ineffectual,

effectual, the whole world ſhould be traverſed by him, till he ſhould find her, or receive authentic proofs of her non-exiſtence: for what availed his newly acquired liberty, or immenſe riches, if his only child, the child of affliction and ſorrow, the darling of his heart, and the repreſentative of her angelic mother, was loſt to him; no earthly joy could compenſate ſuch a loſs; and his mind would continue, in that caſe, as much a ſlave to bitterneſs of grief, as his body had been nearly eleven years at Algiers.

The wind proving at laſt fair, our worthy friends embarked together for Dover, where we ſhall leave them toſſed by the winds, which blew them to the Suſſex ſhore, and in the mean time give an account of Captain Rivers's deliverance from ſlavery.

We left this unhappy man lamenting his hard fate at Tuniſma, in the gardens of Eben Ali, where he continued for ſome time inconſolable. Providence, however,

that

that ever watches over the truly unfortunate, inſpired him with patience and reſignation; and his lot became leſs and leſs ſevere, by having conſtantly a better hereafter in view. Sleep again befriended him, and the wretched food allotted him became more and more palatable; and recovering his health and ſtrength, he laboured with the utmoſt aſſiduity, and very ſoon became a kind of favourite with the overſeer, who in time provided him with a better lodging, diſtinct from that of the other ſlaves; his aliment was, likewiſe, ſuperior to that of the reſt: yet notwithſtanding that well-deſerved partiality, this petty tyrant had never ſufficient humanity to allow him pen, ink, and paper, though he frequently had requeſted it.

Eben Ali often came to Tuniſma, accompanied by a large party of his friends and acquaintance; and although delighted with the prodigious improvements, and the beauties ſo manifeſtly produced,

through

through the ſkill and talents of the Captain, in his gardens and plantations, yet this deſpotic moor would never exchange a ſyllable with the unfortunate captive, but looked at him with an haughty inſolence, full of diſdain and ſcorn. Fatima, his favourite wife, ſometimes accompanied him, but never had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing the Captain excepting the firſt time her huſband conducted her into the gardens. Her eſteem and affection towards him was not in the leaſt diminiſhed: and after having in time paſt begged and entreated Eben to accept of the unfortunate European's offered ranſom, and ſo ſet him at liberty, and had been always repulſed, and even at laſt with ſome ſeverity, ſhe had given over her ſolicitations in his behalf, as finding them vain and fruitleſs. When ſhe firſt beheld him in the gardens, her heart informed her he was the object of her compaſſion; for although years had paſſed away ſince her firſt ſeeing him, the change in his complection, which had ſuf-

fered

fered much from the ſun, and the different garb that he now wore from that in which ſhe beheld him, had not in the leaſt obliterated him from her memory. She ſtill found in him that noble countenance, that fortitude of mind, and that inexpreſſible affability and reſpectful ſweetneſs in his eyes, which at firſt ſight had attracted her attention towards him. The Captain, on his ſide, immediately knew her, although her face was partly covered with a veil; and his ſatisfaction beamed forth inſtantly from his eyes, when on making her a moſt profound reverence, ſhe gently waved her hand and advanced three or four ſteps towards him, as if wanting to ſpeak to him; which Eben Ali no ſooner obſerved, than he ordered the Captain to be locked up till ſuch time Fatima ſhould leave the gardens: which command was inſtantly put in execution. This circumſtance again renewed this amiable man's grief, and the more ſo, as he never ſaw her at Tuniſma after this. Time, however,

ever, reconciled him once more to his abject ſtate, flattering himſelf with the certain idea, that it could not laſt for ever, as death ſooner or later would put a period to his ſufferings. Upwards of eleven years did he continue in this deplorable ſituation, when it pleaſed Providence to releaſe him from a painful ſlavery, which religion only, and a firm reliance on a happy futurity, had enabled him to ſupport.

One morning the overſeer, finding him at his accuſtomed work, approached him with a ſervile civility and entreaties to follow him into the houſe. Captain Rivers obeyed, and was ſtruck with amazement on his entering into a large ſaloon, with the magnificence of the furniture, as more becoming a monarch than a dealer in ſlaves, eſpecially as the Algerines are generally remarkable for the ſimplicity of their taſte in that reſpect. The overſeer immediately taking off his chains, pronounced him free. Upon which ſeveral

ſlaves

ſlaves approached him, to take off his dreſs, the badge of ſlavery, and pointing to a rich mooriſh habit that was provided for him, whilſt others were preparing a bath, filled with aromatic herbs, to make uſe of previouſly to his dreſſing himſelf. Captain Rivers, aſtoniſhed beyond deſcription at what he ſaw, aſked what this mockery meant, as he had not the leaſt idea of his approaching happineſs. "No "mockery, great lord," anſwered he, "it is by the orders of the mighty Fati-"ma, who wiſhes to ſee you."—"Fati-"ma!" exclaimed he in a tone of joy, "have you at laſt prevailed upon your "huſband to grant me my liberty?—Oh, "may kind Heaven reſtore me my daugh-"ter, and the remainder of this life ſhall "be devoted to your ſervice. Where is "Eben Ali?" ſaid he to the overſeer; "conduct me to him, that with my thanks "I may direct him where to receive my "ranſom."—"Great lord," replied he, "the mighty Eben Ali is at Algiers; but

"his

" his ſignet accompanied the orders of " Fatima to lead you to her: a chariot " is prepared, and ſlaves to attend you " thither."—" Gracious heaven!" exclaimed the Captain, " ſhall I again re- " viſit my native country, and behold my " long-loſt beloved child? Or is it illuſi- " on, is it a dream, that lifts me up thus, " in order to be daſhed more ſeverely " againſt that rock on which for ſo many " years I have ſplit?" The overſeer then begged of him not to delay, as Fatima's commands were to uſe all poſſible expedition to convey him to Algiers for reaſons of moment. The Captain ſcarcely knowing what to think, or what to do, addreſſed his moſt fervent thanks to that all-gracious power that had thus delivered him from a life worſe than death, and reſtored him to that liberty which, next to health, is the greateſt bleſſing. Then having with all imaginable haſte performed the ceremony of bathing and dreſſing, he deſired to be conducted to the chariot.

The

The overſeer replied, it was ready; and added, a collation was prepared for him in the next room, of which, if he pleaſed, he might partake before his departure. The Captain followed his leader into an adjoining apartment, where a table was ſpread with the moſt exquiſite refreſhments: but his heart was too much oppreſſed with hope and fear to admit room for appetite; he therefore hurried into the chariot, which was drawn by ſix fleet Barbary horſes, and attended by ſix ſlaves, all equally well mounted, he ſoon arrived at the houſe of Eben Ali, at Algiers. He was inſtantly introduced to Fatima, whom he found ſitting croſslegged, according to the cuſtom of the moors, on a ſopha, raiſed about a foot from the ground, covered with carpets; ſhe was ſupported by cuſhions, and appeared in a languid and weak ſtate of health. "Approach, noble "Chriſtian," ſaid ſhe, "long have I wiſh-"ed to aſſiſt and to relieve you, but my "power has ever proved inadequate to

"my

" my will. Now you behold me free, and " miſtreſs of my actions. Delivered, " like you, from our mutual tyrant, the " firſt uſe I make of it is to give you your " liberty." Captain Rivers bowed himſelf to the ground, and with the moſt heart-felt gratitude returned thanks to his generous deliverer; who, with a benevolent aſpect, ſaid to him, " Give me an " account of your adventures, and who " you are, and in my return I will inform " you of my misfortunes." And having ordered coffee, ſherbet, and fruit, and deſired the Captain to place himſelf near her on the carpet, the Algerines not uſing chairs, after refreſhing himſelf, ſhe requeſted him to begin his narration, with which he immediately complied; and finiſhed, with begging her permiſſion to go in queſt of his long loſt child, which having once recovered, his life ſhould be at her diſpoſal, if ſhe would ſo far honour him as to accept of his ſervices. Fatima thanked him, both for the account he gave of himſelf,

ſelf, and the offer of his ſervices to her, and ſaid, "Nothing is more juſt than to "endeavour to find your daughter. And "as to your devoting your life to me— "alas! time hath been, when I ſhould "have placed my glory in the having be- "longed to you; but now, your grati- "tude and ſentiments of generoſity are "uſeleſs to me: my thread of life will "ſoon be cut aſunder; one ſatisfaction is "left me, that before my ſoul takes its "flight into an unknown region, I ſhall "make one deſerving mortal happy."

The Captain, ſincerely touched with this melancholy prelude, aſked her in the moſt affectionate manner—whether it was in the power of medicine to reſtore her to health; and begged to know the nature of her indiſpoſition, aſſuring her, in the moſt tender expreſſions imaginable, to uſe his utmoſt efforts for her recovery. "All aid is vain," replied Fatima, "for "Eben Ali, our common tyrant, hath "carried the effects of his ill-grounded

"jealouſy

" jealouſy beyond the grave."—"What!" exclaimed the Captain with ſurpriſe, "Is "Eben Ali dead?" "He is," replied ſhe, "and dreading I ſhould become the "property of another after his death, "eſpecially your's, he, during a ſevere "illneſs, of which it was impoſſible he "could recover, prepared a lingering "poiſon for me, which never fails to "procure certain death; he having fre-"quently tried its fatal effects on thoſe "who (not like me) refuſed to be ſubſer-"vient to his will. My patience and "humility inſpired him with what he "called, unparallelled love for me, but "which I conſidered as deteſtable bruta-"lity, deſpotiſm, and tyranny. Being "as yet but a child when he bought me "as a ſlave, my infant looks pleaſed him, "and when of a proper age, he married "me, diſpoſing, at the ſame time, of "every female ſlave in his houſe, except-"ing thoſe whom age and deformity had "reduced to become menial ſervants:

"and

" and I became ſole reigning empreſs of
" his heart. That heart—totally inſen-
" ſible to the ſoft ſenſations of friendſhip
" and humanity, and where nothing but
" exceſs of ſelf-love and cruelty was
" lodged. How have I humbled myſelf,
" and what repeated trials have I not
" made, to awaken but one ſpark of ten-
" derneſs (in his ſtubborn ſoul) towards
" you, even in thoſe moments, when the
" proteſtations of his affections were at
" that height, that he would have laid all
" his poſſeſſions at my feet. And although
" I only ſued for a mitigation of thoſe
" hardſhips I was informed were to be
" impoſed upon you, he refuſed me with
" barbarity, when at the ſame time I
" have ſeen him lift up his ſabre and
" ſtrike off, at one blow, the head of any
" ſlave, who, in the ſmalleſt trifle, had
" not punctually obeyed my orders.
" This horrid diſpoſition, ſo repugnant
" to my ſoul, gave me a deteſtation of
" him, and of life itſelf. Fly from him

" I could

" I could not, being guarded by bolts,
" bars, locks, and the eyes of my tor-
" menting Argus. I left off ſoliciting in
" your behalf, finding it fruitleſs: and it
" was with the utmoſt difficulty I could
" find five minutes to ſpeak in private to
" the inſtrument of his vengeance, the
" overſeer, in order to provide you with
" better food, and a more commodious
" lodging, as Eben Ali took delight in
" repeating to me the diſtreſſes you la-
" boured under." The Captain teſtified his thanks for this kind attention to him, by a profound reverence, not being willing to interrupt her, when ſhe continued—
" Eben Ali having conceived an account-
" able jealouſy of you, eſpecially ſince
" that time I beheld you in the garden,
" when my compaſſion for you proved
" ſtronger than my prudence, and in-
" clined me to ſpeak to you; for which,
" I doubt not, you was ſeverely puniſh-
" ed. From that time I never accompa-
" nied him to Tuniſma, as I preferred

" being

" being locked up and barricaded, to the
" misery I endured of seeing you ill-
" treated. Suffice it to say, that my
" tyrant fell ill, and there being no hopes
" left of his recovery, he sent to such of
" his friends, as he thought necessary to
" witness a deed of gift, by which he
" made me heiress to all his immense pos-
" sessions, in case I survived him, as a
" proof of his violent love and adoration
" of me. I silently blessed my fate at
" the prospect of becoming so soon the
" mistress of my actions; which satis-
" faction, however, was greatly disturb-
" ed by the visible decline of my health;
" as I was frequently seized with faint-
" ing fits, which generally gave place
" to excruciating pains in my stomach,
" which the monster seemed to enjoy
" with inexpressible pleasure, and would
" often exclaim, 'Oh, my Fatima, sove-
" reign mistress of my heart, one grave
" at last will hold us both! Fate hath
" been propitious to my wishes, that no

" man whatever ſhall poſſeſs you after
" my death. How delightful then, and
" how welcome to me, are thoſe ſpaſms
" with which I ſee you attacked, as they
" certainly unite us in death.' As I was
" never more in love with life, than at
" that time, ſeeing his end approach faſter
" and faſter, yet I was conſtrained to ap-
" pear ſatisfied with his inhuman wiſhes,
" leſt he ſhould have ſtrangled me before
" his own diſſolution. I diſſembled then
" as much as I was able; and though my
" fits returned more frequently, yet
" the pains gradually diminiſhed as my
" ſtrength decreaſed every day. Yeſter-
" day's ſun had ſcarce appeared when he
" called me up from the matt, on which
" I repoſed by his couch, and ſaid to
" me, 'Fatima, Death hath appeared to
" me with all its grim attendants: I have
" but one ſatisfaction in leaving this
" globe—you cannot ſurvive me above
" three or four days, which you muſt paſs
" in your devotion. Conſcious that your

" heart

" heart leaned towards that Chriſtian
" dog at Tuniſma, I have adminiſtered
" ſlow poiſon to you in the coffee you
" daily drank, it has operated partly to
" my wiſhes, tho' not altogether ſo, ſince
" my vital breath muſt be ſtopped, before
" your eyes will be ſhut up in everlaſting
" darkneſs. Your life is hurrying to its
" end; I know the effect of the poiſon,
" from the frequent experiments I have
" made on objects of my hatred, but to
" you I gave it as the object of my love.
" Give me then in return the laſt embrace
" and thanks for having preſerved you
" entirely to myſelf.' I was furiouſly
" enraged at this ſpeech of the tyrant,
" and was prepared to upbraid him
" with all the bitterneſs my ſoul was
" then capable of, when he was ſeized
" with convulſions, which, for ſome mi-
" nutes, I beheld with tranſports of joy,
" but my heart ſoon ſickened at the ſight,
" I dropped a tear, and my compaſſion tak-
" ing place of hatred and abhorrence, I

"called in my female ſlaves to ſuccour
"him, if poſſible; for notwithſtanding
"that my pity was rouſed for his ſituati-
"on, yet I held him undeſerving of the
"leaſt aſſiſtance from myſelf. Deſpair-
"ing at my diſmal fate, which prevented
"my being united to you, ſhould it have
"proved agreeable to yourſelf; for unac-
"cuſtomed to diſguiſe my ſentiments,
"and having ever been debarred from
"the commerce of thoſe of my ſex who
"were able to have inſtructed me in the
"proper decorum of female behaviour, I
"conſulted only my own heart, ſenſible
"it meant our mutual happineſs, founded
"on honour and virtue, in the propoſal I
"intended to have made you. But my
"approaching end barring that wiſhed-
"for felicity, my only care was now
"yourſelf, firſt to ſet you free, and
"then to put you in poſſeſſion of that
"immenſe wealth the tyrant bequeathed
"to me, not with a view I ſhould be
"happy with it after his deceaſe, he

"know-

" knowing but too well I could not enjoy
" it long, and not caring what became of
" his riches after his demiſe and mine,
" from want of humanity, that did not
" even furniſh him with an idea, how
" many periſhing objects it might have
" rendered comfortable, by having it
" made over to them, after my vital
" blood ſhould have ceaſed to flow. It
" then became me to think of the unfor-
" tunate, among whom you ſtood firſt in
" the liſt, as being dear to my heart, and
" deſerving of my affection. Certain of
" your generoſity and benevolence, which
" would relieve ſuch of the afflicted as
" ſtood moſt in need of aſſiſtance: I there-
" fore took the precaution to make my-
" ſelf immediately miſtreſs of his ſignet
" —that paſſport of all his commands.
" Then taking his keys which held his
" treaſures of diamonds, pearls, and gold,
" the two firſt articles, to which I have
" joined my own ornaments, which are
" not inconſiderable, I depoſited them in

" this caſket, with which I now preſent
" you. The gold and ſilver coin is lodg-
" ed in that cheſt (pointing at the ſame
" time towards it) and here is the key
" which opens it (giving it him with the
" caſket). My next care was to charge
" my female ſlaves not to ſtir out of the
" apartment till my return thither. I
" then went to that part of the houſe al-
" lotted for the male ſlaves (who were ig-
" norant of their maſter's ſituation), and
" ordered a chariot, with ſix of the
" beſt horſes, and as many ſlaves on
" horſeback to attend, in order to fetch
" you from Tuniſma, and to treat you
" as if you had been Ali himſelf: giving
" them, at the ſame time, his ſignet,
" which I have again received. As thoſe
" unhappy men worſhipped me as a
" Deity, and with more affection than
" they obeyed their maſter from duty,
" they bowed themſelves to the ground,
" in token of obeiſance, and in a few
" minutes I had the ſatisfaction to ſee

" them

" them all mounted, and take the road to
" Tunisma. My heart then became calm,
" and I returned to my apartment,
" where Eben Ali was yet struggling with
" the pangs of death. I called in the
" rest of my domestics to give him all
" the assistance in their power. And
" feeling my resentment all at once give
" way, I sincerely forgave him my ap-
" proaching end; and drawing near his
" couch, to wipe away the drops of an-
" guish which stood upon his face, when
" suddenly he opened his eyes, fixing
" them upon me, and with a look the
" most savage I ever beheld, he made an
" effort to seize me by the throat, as if
" to strangle me; I screamed, and start-
" ed back, and his strength failing, he
" dropped his hand, rolled his eye-balls,
" and uttering a dreadful imprecation and
" hideous groan, he expired.—The satis-
" faction displayed on the countenance
" of my slaves, convinced me how wel-
" come the death of the tyrant was to

" them all; though their reſpect for
" me kept them mute. I was ſoon after
" ſeized with one of my accuſtomed
" fits, which, by its duration, made me
" apprehend the loſing the ſatisfaction
" of making you happy, as I feared I
" could not live till your arrival. I am,
" however, recovered, and am willing
" to make the beſt uſe of thoſe moments
" which are yet ſpared me, by adviſing
" you to ſend for ſeveral Europeans,
" of whom there are many in Algiers,
" as you will ſee in a liſt, where their
" names and places of abode are marked
" down. Make them your friends by
" rich preſents, and let them provide
" you with a ſhip to convey you from
" hence, as ſecretly as poſſible, for
" fear the Moors purſuing you, on
" account of your newly-acquired poſ-
" ſeſſions. But let me obtain one fa-
" vour of you, which is, not to quit me
" till death ſhall divide you from me.
" For you alone I could wiſh to live!

" To

" To your daughter I could wiſh to " act a mother's part, in tenderneſs " and affection, but"——here a flood of tears intercepted her farther utterance. The Captain fell on his knees, wiping off the tears which bedewed her lovely countenance, then kiſſing her hand, thanked her in terms which denoted perfectly the high ſenſe he had of her benevolence, humanity, and goodneſs, towards him. Fatima, as much pleaſed with his gratitude, as ſhe was with herſelf for having promoted it, thought of an expedient to ſecure his ſafety after her death, which was, by ſending for ſome friends who were ſincerely attached to her, and to marry the Captain in their preſence, according to the Mooriſh laws, whereby he ſhould become unmoleſted maſter of all her poſſeſſions, and leſs liable to perſecution from her countrymen, as he could not obtain a paſſport for his ſafe departure, there being at that time no European Conſul at Algiers, as every

Chriſtian Power had declared war againſt that kingdom: accordingly, ſhe made the propoſal to Captain Rivers, who accepted of it, not only for his own ſafety, but out of gratitude for her unparallelled goodneſs towards him, and to accompliſh his offer of devoting his life to her ſervice. Their union took place that very day; and the Captain, by the advice of Fatima, ſold every thing which had belonged to Eben Ali; ſuch as houſes, land, plantations, &c. He likewiſe redeemed from ſlavery above fifty unfortunate Europeans, all of whom he ordered to repair on board the ſhip which was to ſail with him for Europe; providing them all with Mooriſh habits, to be the leſs diſtinguiſhed. His liberality ſhewed itſelf every where, the conſequence of which was, that whether Moor or Turk he employed in his ſeveral expeditions, all ſeemed willing to ſerve him, and to obey his commands with pleaſure. Serenity and tranquillity of mind would have once

more

more become an inhabitant of the Captain's boſom, had it not been checked by the impoſſibility of conveying letters to his beloved daughter, Dr. Worthy, Mrs. Birch, &c. as none could depart from Algiers without being opened, which at once would have made him known to be a Chriſtian, and from that event alone, every other circumſtance, relating to himſelf, might be traced, and, perhaps, a deprivation of his wealth—and what would have been infinitely worſe, a ſecond bondage, in all probability, would have enſued. The gentle Fatima's declining health gave him likewiſe inexpreſſible inquietudes, and nothing was wanting on his ſide to make thoſe few days ſhe did live with him, as happy as her deplorable ſituation would admit of. Often would ſhe exclaim, that in the few days ſhe had paſſed with him, ſhe had enjoyed more felicity, than ever ſhe experienced during the twelve years ſhe had been Ali's wife: and that thoſe happy

hours

hours more than compenſated for the rigorous treatment ſhe had met with from her huſband: but that which crowned her bliſs, was the ſeeing him free and enabled, through her means, to paſs the remainder of his life in ſocial comfort with his child and countrymen, ſo as to make him forget the miſeries he had endured in ſlavery. Ten days were now elapſed ſince his union with Fatima, who he anxiouſly wiſhed to have conveyed on board his ſhip, which had been manned and ſtored, and was ready to ſet ſail, flattering himſelf, could ſhe but once reach Montpellier in the ſouth of France, the excellent ſkill of thoſe of the faculty there might, perhaps, afford her relief, and prolong her days, who was now become extremely dear to him; for the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, joined to the patience with which ſhe bore her painful decline, promiſed him permanent happineſs with her: but this he found impoſ-

ſible

ſible to accompliſh, ſhe being ſo debilitated, and her fits returned ſo frequently, that he feared her diſſolution hourly. He himſelf had endeavoured to expel the conſuming poiſon that preyed upon her vitals, by every gentle antidote his knowledge furniſhed him with, but all in vain. And ſhe fell a victim to Ali's cruelty on the thirteenth day of her happineſs, as ſhe ſtiled it, and expired without any pang in the arms of her beloved huſband, whom ſhe tenderly embraced, and, with a ſmile on her countenance, bid him an everlaſting farewell. The Captain lamented her loſs with all the bitterneſs of grief, a heart like his, replete with virtue, was capable of. For, excluſive of his gratitude, which was unbounded, ſhe was a truly amiable woman, of excellent principles and good morals, which had they been cultivated in Europe, ſhe would have proved an ornament to her ſex: ſhe was beſides poſſeſſed of exquiſite beauty, her ſkin being of a delicate white, which

denoted

denoted but too well her not being an African; and having been at a tender age introduced into Ali's houſe, ſhe was ignorant of the place of her nativity, as well as of the name and condition of her parents, and had hardly completed her twenty-fifth year when ſhe died.

Captain Rivers paid her, in her interment, all the honours due to her merit, and to the fortune ſhe had been poſſeſſed of; and attended her corpſe to the funeral, dropping a ſincere and friendly tear over her grave. After liberally rewarding all thoſe that had belonged to Eben Ali, and giving them all their freedom beſides, he ſet forward towards his ſhip, taking with him the caſket, containing the jewels, and bills of exchange from the moſt capital merchants in Algiers, to thoſe in different parts of Europe, and found himſelf poſſeſſed of upwards of one hundred thouſand pounds ſterling, excluſive of diamonds, pearls, &c.—"Amiable Fatima," would he cry out,

out, when alone in his cabin, "it is to "your goodneſs alone I owe this prodi- "gious wealth! Would it had pleaſed "Providence you had been a ſharer in "it! In a very little time, I am certain, "you would have been as much miſtreſs "of my heart, as ever my dear Charlotte "was the wife of my affection. Your "amiable qualities, and unſpeakable ge- "neroſity, tied me to you with the "ſtrongeſt bonds of gratitude. And "your friendſhip for me had ſo effec- "tually overpowered my inclinations "towards you, as left no other wiſh than "to live and die for you. My Louiſa, "my, perhaps, loſt child, would have "loved and revered you as a mother, and "as a friend that had reſtored her father "to liberty and life!—Again are you "become my only care. Ye gracious "Powers, that have thus miraculouſly "preſerved me, complete your bleſſings "by granting me to behold my daugh- "ter!" The wind proving a little fa-

vourable

vourable, the Captain had a moſt proſperous voyage, and in due time arrived in Ireland, where, having diſpoſed of his ſhip, and diſcharged all his attendants, and preſented every one of them with a ſum of money, he hired two Europeans to attend him in ſearch of his daughter: but, to his inexpreſſible grief, he could not receive the leaſt intelligence about her. He was informed of the death of Dr. Worthy, and of that of Mrs. Birch. But no one could tell him what was become of Birch himſelf, who, with his children, had quitted the village, to ſhelter him from his creditors, being much involved in debt, by the having led a diſſolute life ſince his wife's deceaſe. The miniſter of the pariſh was likewiſe entirely unacquainted with every circumſtance relating to Miſs Rivers; his predeceſſor, who had ſeen her, and to whom ſhe had given her direction when ſhe accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Pianelli to France, had been dead for ſome years.

And

And what was the more remarkable, that although there were ſtill ſome of the ſame inhabitants remaining in the village, and he did not leave a houſe unſearched in his inquiries, no one could afford him the leaſt ſatisfaction: till, at laſt, a lad belonging to a public-houſe, that very houſe where formerly its honeſt landlord had given ſuch an advantageous picture of Mademoiſelle Doucette to Signor Pianelli, but who was now ſettled in another place; this lad ſaid he remembered the pretty Miſs Rivers very well, who, after Mrs. Birch's death, went to live with a French milliner, who took her with her to France, but he could not recollect her name. It occurred immediately to the Captain, that this could be no other milliner than that very Mademoiſelle who lived in the village, during his reſidence there, and of whom his beloved Charlotte often would buy one trifle or other: but his long abſence from the place, and the many misfortunes which had befallen him

ſince

ſince that time, had entirely obliterated her name from his memory. With no other information than what he had obtained from this lad, he determined to ſet out for Paris: and not only find out and enquire after every milliner there, but would likewiſe ſearch every province in France, till ſuch time as he ſhould find or receive intelligence of his beloved child. For without her, what was life to him but a dreary deſert, without friends, that is, ſuch as he wiſhed in reality to call ſo, and without acquaintance to form a ſocial connection with—a ſtranger to all thoſe he formerly had known, what proſpect of felicity could he hope for, but that of aſſiſting the miſerable, with that wealth bounteous Heaven had beſtowed on him with his liberty? Fatima too, who, from the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, could have ſoothed thoſe pangs which the loſs of his child inevitably would inflict on him—ſhe likewiſe was gone for ever. But, would he add, why deſpair! Why

murmur

murmur againſt the decrees of an all-ruling Providence! Perhaps this child, I now with ſuch eagerneſs ſeek, may, when found, overwhelm me in greater grief than what I hitherto have experienced. Who knows what her conduct may have been during my painful abſence—into what ſociety ſhe may have been thrown—to what miſery ſhe may have been expoſed—Gracious Goodneſs! if ſhe yet lives, grant I may behold her virtuous, though ever ſo neceſſitous! Theſe and other ſimilar ideas occupied his mind till he arrived in Paris; but his ſearch there after his child proved as fruitleſs as that in Ireland had been. Among the great and powerful he had not the leaſt conception of either meeting with, or hearing from her, as he imagined her to be in a moſt abject ſtate. At laſt he came to a reſolution of having a circumſtantial detail, relating to himſelf and daughter, inſerted in all the public papers, as that undoubtedly would procure him ſome light with regard to

her

her ſituation. But from this he was diverted by an account he received, of a perſon anſwering the deſcription of Mademoiſelle Doucette, accompanied by a very handſome young Engliſh woman, having come to ſettle in Paris, from Ireland, as milliners; but not meeting with the deſired ſucceſs, they had quitted that capital for London, where they now reſided. The Captain immediately repaired to the houſe they had occupied before they departed from France, and obtained nearly the ſame information, as likewiſe the name of the elder perſon, but could not learn that of the younger. His inclination then inſtantly led him to ſet off, with all poſſible expedition, for London, not chuſing to advertiſe her publicly, till he had made inquiries about her in that metropolis, leaving, however, his addreſs with the maſter of the hotel, with entreaties to continue his inquiries, and to ſend him notice of his ſucceſs. When he arrived at Calais, he met with Belmont,

as

as has been already quoted, as likewiſe their mutual confidence in each other, relating their reſpective loſs, and their embarking together for Dover, when the wind blew them to the Suſſex ſhore inſtead of that of Kent. They were landed in a ſmall boat at Brighthelmſtone, that theatre of faſhionable amuſements, when an idea ſtruck the Captain that at that ſeaſon of the year, ſhoals of milliners reſorted to that ſpot, and among them there was a probability he might hear of his beloved child. He was the more inclined to this inquiſition, as he was prevented in purſuing his journey for London that day, by the indiſpoſition of Lord Belmont, who being ſeized with a kind of ague, retired to bed immediately after his landing. The Captain was indefatigable in his inquiries after his Louiſa, which all proved abortive: though he in reality met with the milliner, touching whom, he had received intelligence of a ſuppoſition, that his daughter had accom-

panied

panied her: but he no ſooner ſaw the young Engliſh woman in queſtion, but was inſtantly convinced it was not her, both from her age, which was near thirty, and the account the young woman gave of herſelf, and of her parents, who were yet living in London, where ſhe was born. And although he was ignorant of the ſhape and figure of his daughter, after ſo long an abſence, yet at firſt ſight of the young milliner, he was convinced ſhe was not Louiſa, her complection, and the colour of her eyes, inſtantly deſtroyed the ſuggeſtion.

Vexed, fatigued, and grieved to the ſoul, the diſconſolate Captain returned to his friend, whom he found rather better, and acquainted him with his diſappointment. Lord Belmont adviſed him, as he had hitherto ſought for Miſs Rivers among the lower claſs of mankind, to change his objects, and to direct his inquiries to thoſe in a higher ſphere; for, added he, the promiſing genius and increaſing

creaſing abilities, joined to the misfortunes of the young lady, might, in all probability, have induced ſome benevolent woman of faſhion and fortune to take her under protection: therefore, continued he, try what information the ball room may afford you this evening.

The Captain highly approved the idea; accordingly he dreſſed, and repaired to the room, though with a heavy heart and hopeleſs expectation. I have already obſerved his appearance there, and his melancholy aſpect, which excluded him from all converſation with the heterogeneous group. The impreſſion his amiable daughter had made upon him, her affability and politeneſs towards him, her ſolicitude to provide him with a ſeat, and the erroneous account he had received relating to her parentage, as likewiſe the ſatisfaction of Lord Sweetland's being at Brighthelmſtone, and ſeeing his lady, who, at that time, as well as Louiſa, was entirely

tirely unknown to him; all this has been already mentioned.

Reſerving, then, all farther inquiries about his unhappy child, and referring them to Lord Sweetland, who he determined to viſit the next morning, he left the rooms, and returned to Lord Belmont, with a chearful countenance, though with a heart not leſs oppreſſed with anxious doubts and fears. His friend entertained great hope from the Captain's interview with Lord Sweetland the enſuing morning; which being arrived, at a proper hour Captain Rivers waited on that nobleman, who but the inſtant before had left the houſe to enjoy a walk by the ſeaſide, and whom he would have joined had it not been for Lady Sweetland's accidentally croſſing the hall juſt as he had uttered his intention of joining her Lord, and politely requeſted his walking in, and to ſit down, as Lord Sweetland's return would not exceed five minutes. Captain Rivers obeyed her Ladyſhip's commands,

and

and being ſeated, inquired after the health of the young ladies whom he had ſeen at the ball with her the evening before, and whether they were her daughters?— "The two youngeſt are," anſwered ſhe; "the eldeſt is the child of my affection, "but not at all related to me." The Captain was juſt prepared to aſk ſome queſtions about Louiſa, when Lord Sweetland entered, and with him two ladies, intimate acquaintances of his Lady's, who deſiring her opinion on a faſhionable poem juſt then publiſhed, ſhe withdrew with them, after having introduced the ſtranger to her Lord, who ſhe informed him came to wait on him, and was the gentleman of whom ſhe and her children had received ſo much attention and civility the evening before.

Lord Sweetland addreſſed himſelf to the Captain, and begged to know who he had the honour of ſpeaking to; who, in anſwer, ſaid, "I am not at all ſurpriſed "that after almoſt two and twenty years "abſence from England, Lord Sweetland

" does not recollect one who formerly had
" the happineſs of being high in his eſ-
" teem. You, my Lord, whoſe counte-
" nance bears no marks of misfortunes,
" are not otherwiſe altered, than what
" ſuch a term of years naturally brings
" along with it. You, my heart recog-
" niſed at your entering the room. Look
" at me, and try if you can trace no re-
" membrance of your former friend and
" fellow collegian."—" Alas, Sir!" re-
plied his Lordſhip, looking ſtedfaſtly on
him, " I dare not utter who I wiſh you
" to be, leſt I ſhould be miſtaken; and
" my diſappointment in not finding in
" you the friend of my boſom, the brave,
" the worthy, and the too unfortunate
" Captain Rivers, to whom you bear a
" moſt ſtrong reſemblance, would"——
" Enough, enough!" interrupted the Cap-
tain, and falling on his Lordſhip's neck
he exclaimed, " I am the ſame, the long-
" loſt, unfortunate Rivers, reſtored to
" life, freedom, and wealth—and, Oh,

" could

" could I add, to happineſs! though
" that felicity, yet imperfect, I now en-
" joy at the ſight of my worthy friend,
" whom I now preſs in thoſe arms, from
" which he has been ſo long eſtranged;
" and to find that warmth of friendſhip,
" which formerly ſubſiſted between us,
" ſtill glow with the ſame ardour, ex-
" empts me from being entirely miſera-
" ble, when I behold Lord Sweetland,
" whoſe ſacred friendſhip ſo amply repays
" mine." " Ye all-gracious Powers,"
exclaimed his Lordſhip, " and do I again
" behold my Rivers—the friend of my
" ſoul, and of my earlieſt affections!
" Where have you been, how, and when
" brought hither—what propitious ſtar
" conducted you to this ſhore? Have you
" ſeen your Louiſa? Where is ſhe?"—
" That queſtion," interrupted the Cap-
tain, " damps all my joy, and runs like
" a ſhivering ague thro' all my veins. Alas,
" ſhe is loſt, at leaſt to me, I fear—loſt
" for ever."—" Loſt for ever!" replied

Lord Sweetland with aſtoniſhment, "has "the joy of ſeeing you overpowered her "gentle ſpirit, and cloſed her eyes for "ever?" Of ſeeing me!" ſaid the Captain, heaving a bitter ſigh, "Alas, my "friend, I have not ſeen her, nor can I "find her, though I have over-run two "kingdoms for that purpoſe!"—"Not "ſeen her!" exclaimed Lord Sweetland: "why, my dear friend, this is all a riddle "to me! Have you not been informed "that the young lady you ſo much ad-"mired laſt night at the ball was Miſs "Rivers, your daughter, and my dearly "beloved adopted child?"—"All-ruling "Providence," exclaimed the Captain, "this bliſs is too much—too much in-"deed!" and immediately ſwooned away. Lord Sweetland, aſtoniſhed beyond conception at what he had heard, and now ſaw, to all appearances, his friend lifeleſs; and not having any water at hand, rang the bell repeatedly, with ſome violence, which at laſt brought

Lady

Lady Sweetland herſelf into the room, juſt as the Captain opened his eyes and recovered, without the aſſiſtance of water. Her ladyſhip was ſoon informed of the cauſe, and thanked Heaven for this ſo much wiſhed-for event: but prudently begged he would not too ſoon diſcover himſelf to his lovely daughter, for fear of fatal conſequences, as her heart and ſentiments were of that delicate nature, as could not encounter with ſuch a ſudden, and ſuch an unexpected change in her ſituation; although ſhe had ſupported herſelf with wonderful courage in the many ſcenes of adverſity ſhe had experienced. Captain Rivers thanked her for the caution, aſſuring her he would be as prudent as ſhe herſelf could poſſibly be under ſuch circumſtances; and entreated her to prepare the ſweet girl of ſeeing her now happy father, who for ſo many years had been loſt to her and to the world. That he, in the mean time, would ſolicit Lord Sweetland to acquaint him how his dear

Louiſa had been ſupported, and how long ſhe had been under his and Lady Sweetland's protection; and that he, on his part, would inform them of every particular relating to his long abſence, whenever they ſhould be diſpoſed to hear it. Lord Sweetland immediately gave the Captain a curſory detail relating to his daughter, referring him to her, however, and to her journal, for particulars. Whilſt Lady Sweetland informed Louiſa, that the amiable ſtranger was ſtill locked up with Lord Sweetland, and that, by what ſhe had been able to gather from their converſation, during her ſhort ſtay in the room with them, was, that he came in ſearch of a daughter whom he had left in Ireland fifteen years ago, and was not now to be found. "And who "knows, my dear Miſs Rivers," continued ſhe, "but this very man, who thus "attracted your notice laſt night, may "be your noble, your worthy father; "and I am rather more inclined to ſup-

"poſe

" poſe it, from my obſervation, that
" there is a great reſemblance in your
" looks, particularly when you ſmile: I
" thought ſo laſt night in the ball-room,
" but the few moments I paſſed with him
" this morning, confirmed it to me more
" and more." " Ah, my dear madam,"
ſaid Louiſa, " you certainly know more
" of this ſtranger than you chuſe to ac-
" quaint me with. For goodneſs ſake
" eaſe my troubled mind, and if it is my
" honoured and much-lamented father—
" Oh let me throw myſelf into his arms
" —let me receive his paternal benedic-
" tion!—Or if it is a friend of his, to
" bring ſome intelligence about him, let
" me ſee him—let me aſk a thouſand
" queſtions about my long-loſt parent!
" Heaven grant, however, that this
" ſtranger, let him be who he will, if
" not my father, is not come to confirm
" his being effectually loſt to me." Here
ſhe ſighed, and her colour forſook her,
as if ſhe had actually heard of her fa-

ther's death: which Lady Sweetland obſerving, ſaid, "Why will my dear "friend anticipate even imagined ſorrow! "Though the ſtranger appeared op- "preſſed with grief and melancholy, "yet it ſeemed rather to proceed from "his having ſuſtained an uncertain, an "ideal loſs, in his ſearch after a beloved "and long abſent child. Heaven grant "it may be your father! and if ſo, pre- "pare to receive him with tranſports of "joy, inſtead of ſtreaming eyes. You "know he was an intimate friend of "Lord Sweetland's when both young "men; and that he preferred to ſpeak "to him, inſtead of me, who am un- "known to him. His fixed regard up- "on you laſt night, the ſimilitude in "your countenance to his, all unite to "prepoſſeſs me with a ſtrong and firm "opinion, that it is the amiable Cap- "tain, who, perhaps, had but an im- "perfect account relating to your reſi- "dence; and as it is impoſſible, after

"ſo

" ſo long a ſeparation, he could have
" known you, it being evident, had
" that been the caſe, he would not have
" contented himſelf with implicitly
" contemplating his child, an effort too
" ſtrong for nature to ſupport, but would
" have given you demonſtrative proofs
" of his being nearly and dearly related
" to you, though in a full aſſembly.
" Every combined circumſtance then
" favours my opinion. And as he un-
" doubtedly, after our quitting the
" ball-room, hath made inquiries about
" you, and receiving information of
" your reſiding with us, his prudence
" ſuggeſted his interrogating Lord Sweet-
" land, previous to his diſcovering him-
" ſelf to you. Chear up your ſpirits
" then, my dear; and if indulgent
" Heaven hath been thus propitious to
" you, in reſtoring to you your excel-
" lent parent, let your firſt gratitude
" and thanks be addreſſed there: and re-
" ceive him with that external ſatisfacti-

" on and joy, as I am ſure you internal-
" ly will be poſſeſſed with, ſhould my
" ſuppoſition prove true."—" My dear
" Lady Sweetland, my beſt beloved
" friend!" replied Louiſa, " your words
" have proved a comfort to my ſoul.
" Oh may you be found a true prophe-
" teſs! and next to Heaven my thanks,
" proceeding from a moſt ſincere and
" grateful heart, will be ever your due.
" Happy, if in the courſe of my future
" life I may be deſerving the continu-
" ation of that tenderneſs and affection,
" I have ever experienced from you."
During this converſation between the ladies, Lord Sweetland had informed the Captain of ſome of the moſt material paſſages in his daughter's life and conduct, not by an exact or circumſtantial detail, time not permitting it; but all he had ſaid, was ſo much to the honour and praiſe of our ſweet Louiſa, that her father, impatient to ſee and embrace her, limited the account of his misfortunes

merely

merely to his captivity in Algiers, and his redemption from thence, through the means of an angelic woman; reſerving the particulars to a more proper opportunity, and earneſtly requeſted his friend to conduct him to his daughter, who, he hoped, Lady Sweetland had prepared, by that time, to receive him as her father, in order that his unexpected preſence might not have too great an effect on her gentle mind. Lord Sweetland immediately complied with his friend's requeſt, and joining with him in opinion of Louiſa's being informed of her happineſs, conducted him into the apartment where ſhe was ſitting with his lady, and both inſtantly roſe as they entered. Louiſa's colour fled from her cheeks, when Lord Sweetland preſented the Captain to her, in the following words: "Permit me, Miſs Rivers, to introduce "to you a dear and worthy friend, "whoſe abſence you have ſo many years "bewailed—and happy am I"—Captain Rivers,

Rivers, unable to ſuppreſs his tranſports any longer, interrupted his friend, by ſnatching her to his boſom, and crying out: "My Louiſa, darling of my ſoul, "beſt beloved daughter! Do I again be- "hold you—and thus bleſſed with virtue "and with friends? Oh, look upon "your now happy parent, and bleſs "me with the name of father!" "My "father!" exclaimed ſhe, throwing her arms about his neck, and bending her head towards his boſom: "All-gracious "Heaven—Is it not illuſion? My fa- "ther!" and fell ſenſeleſs in his arms. The miſerable Captain, almoſt frantic with deſpair, for having, through his raſhneſs (in not waiting for Lady Sweetland's ſummons for his appearance before his child), reduced himſelf and daughter to an effectual ſeparation from each other (as he imagined her dead), called for aſſiſtance on all ſides, which was inſtantly procured, and the amiable Louiſa again opened her eyes, calling

out

out in the ſweeteſt tone of voice——
" Where is my father! Oh, let me
" kneel to him, and aſk his bleſſing!"
" My bleſſing, my deareſt child," replied he, " you ever had! For though
" ſeparated from you, you have been
" the viſible care of Providence—Oh,
" may its goodneſs ever protect you!"
added he (while the tears trickled down his manly cheeks). " But compoſe
" yourſelf let me beg of you—never, I
" hope, ſhall we be parted any more,
" until the hour of our final ſeparation.
" When you are ſufficiently recovered, I
" ſhall be glad to hear how you have
" paſſed your days during my abſence,
" and to whoſe care (next to that of Hea-
" ven) I am indebted in beholding you
" thus, as my ſoul has wiſhed." Lady Sweetland then interpoſed, and begged, for that day at leaſt, Miſs Rivers might be exempted from giving any account of herſelf, as it certainly would affect both her and her father too much, as their

ſpirits

ſpirits were already too far exhauſted, from the ſudden tranſition of a painful uncertainty, to a happy reality. The Captain immediately acquieſced in her requeſt, although he eagerly wiſhed to be informed of every circumſtance relating to his child, whoſe hand he kept locked in his, kiſſing alternately that and her cheek, whilſt his eyes wandered over her whole perſon, expreſſing his ſatisfaction, and at the ſame time an eager deſire (though unuttered) of having ſome proofs from herſelf of her being his, notwithſtanding his delight of knowing her to be his daughter was too exquiſite to admit of a doubt. Louiſa now perfectly recovered, but ſtill confuſed through her exceſs of joy, gueſſed, however, her father's meaning, and begged permiſſion her bracelets might be brought down, for being in a morning dreſs, her arms were ſtill unadorned with thoſe faſhionable ornaments.—The reader may remember, that Captain Rivers, before his departure

for

for Madrid, left with Mrs. Birch, for his daughter, two miniature pictures; the one repreſenting his amiable deceaſed wife, the other that of his mother, the late Lady Rivers; which, through the generoſity of the unfortunate Madame de Polignac, had been converted into bracelets, richly ſet in brilliants, which Louiſa always kept in a box, with the locket, containing that lady's picture, wearing them generally at the ſame time. Lady Sweetland ordered the box to be brought to Miſs Rivers, who, with the moſt enchanting ſmile, ſaid to her father, "if, my dear ſir, you think yourſelf com-"poſed ſufficiently to examine the con-"tents of this box, you will find I have "known how to value your preſents; as "Mrs. Birch charged me, on her death-"bed, not to part with either of them, "nor with a prayer-book, likewiſe left her "from you to me, for any conſideration "in the world." This was the firſt par-ticular, and remarkable inſtance, the

overjoyed

overjoyed Captain had as yet received of her being his child, as Lord Sweetland had only given him a general account. He therefore opened the box with eagerneſs, and beheld the exact repreſentatives of two of the moſt excellent women that had ever exiſted, and who in their different ſtations, as mother and wife, had been ever dear to him. He compared the pictures (dropping a tear at the remembrance of both) with the beautiful countenance of his daughter, and found there was no longer any doubt but ſhe was his Louiſa, formerly the child of his ſorrow and anguiſh—but now, that of his felicity. Then taking up the locket, aſked whoſe picture that contained? "That," anſwered Louiſa, "was another Lady Sweet-"land to me; for there cannot exiſt two "ſouls more noble, or more magnani-"mous, than the lady before you, and my "ever revered Madame de Polignac. "Alike virtuous, alike benevolent, and "alike a moſt tender and affectionate

"generous

" generous friend and protectreſs to your " diſtreſſed orphan child."—" Madame " de Polignac!" exclaimed the Captain with amazement. " Was not ſhe an " Italian lady?" continued he.—" She " reſided there," anſwered Louiſa, " but " was, as well as the Marquis, a native " of France." " Ye gracious Powers!" cried her father, " What an unhoped-for " idea riſes in my breaſt: do not be " alarmed, my deareſt daughter, at a " queſtion I muſt aſk, as it is of the utmoſt " importance to me, and to a moſt diſtin- " guiſhed friend of mine. Was not the " Marquis de Polignac baſely aſſaſſinated " by ſharpers?"—" He was, my dear " ſir," ſaid ſhe, " which was the occaſion " of his lady's death."—" It muſt be " ſo—it muſt be ſo—there is not the leaſt " doubt remaining," cried the Captain. " My dear Louiſa, arm yourſelf with " fortitude—anſwer me but one more " queſtion, and I ſhall be eaſy. Do you " know Lord Belmont?" Louiſa bluſhed like

like ſcarlet at the name, and unable to reply, hung down her head in the utmoſt confuſion. "Speak, my amiable child," ſaid he, "and do not ſcruple to own your "eſteem for a worthy man, to a father, "who is likewiſe your friend, and whoſe "happineſs is centered in yours." Here her tears began to flow, and covering her lovely face with her apron, "Pardon, "my dear ſir," ſaid ſhe, "Oh, pardon "your child for having dared to encou- "rage the hopes of a truly deſerving and "virtuous object, without reflecting it "was you alone had a right to direct, and "to diſpoſe of me. But, believe me, "that till then, I had declined every en- "gagement, and every propoſal, that "had been made me, in the hopes of "having obtained, by your happy return "(which I ever wiſhed for), your ſanc- "tion and approbation in my choice, "until I ſhould complete my twenty-firſt "year. Unleſs, however, the object "ſhould be ſuch, as by his virtue, morals,

"rank,

" rank, and family, ſhould not diſgrace
" mine. All theſe, I flattered myſelf, I
" ſaw in Lord Belmont. His reſpectful
" attention for me, his misfortunes, pro-
" ceeding from an arbitrary uncle, the
" earneſt ſolicitations of Mr. and Madame
" de Polignac in his behalf, and"—Here Louiſa's tears flowed ſo faſt, as to prevent her proceeding. " Oh, continue,
" my darling child," ſaid her father,
" and remove far from you that falſe de-
" licacy, which prevents your making a
" confidant of your parent in ſuch an
" important and ſo wiſhed-for a cauſe."—Then taking her in his arms, and wiping off the pearly drops as they fell—the bluſhing Louiſa, encouraged by her father's endearing expreſſions (and not the leſs by the laſt words he had uttered), and hiding her face in his boſom ſaid, " Shall
" I add, my dear ſir, that my own incli-
" nations, in his favour, led me to be-
" lieve whatever advantageous encomiums
" were beſtowed on him, which I the leſs

" reſiſted

" reſiſted giving credit to, he having
" made ſome impreſſions on my mind the
" firſt time I beheld him at Verſailles;
" and from that time endeavoured, to the
" utmoſt of my abilities, to conquer the
" prepoſſeſſion he had inſpired me with
" in his favour; yet, in ſpite of all my
" efforts, I could not ſo far regain my
" former tranquillity, but that his idea
" would preſent itſelf to my imagination.
" I hope then your child may ſtand ex-
" cuſed, when ſeeing him a twelvemonth
" after, I found I had, on my ſide, in-
" ſpired him with an eſteem for me,
" which he confeſſed to Madame de Po-
" lignac, which took its riſe from the
" ſame inſtant I had ſeen him; that at
" his repeated, earneſt entreaties, and
" thoſe of my worthy Marchioneſs, I gave
" him my promiſe to remain diſengaged
" till he ſhould become his own maſter.
" That period is now arrived, and I am at
" liberty to declare this important ſecret,
" which I was enjoined to keep as ſuch,

" and

" and is the only one my dear Lady Sweet-
" land (turning herſelf to that lady) I ever
" have concealed from you. For though
" compelled to own my heart was not my
" own, yet, as to its poſſeſſor, his name
" was for ever to remain unrevealed in
" my breaſt, till time and circumſtances
" ſhould have authoriſed me to acquaint
" you with it. I muſt likewiſe add, that
" ſince Lord Belmont quitted Florence,
" I never have heard the leaſt ſyllable
" from him, the letter excepted, written
" by him, in pencil, from Bologna, ac-
" quainting me with his baniſhment, and
" ſent to me by a poſtillion. With you,
" my dear madam, I flatter myſelf to
" ſtand acquitted of hypocriſy or faithleſs
" dealings, as the happineſs of Lord Bel-
" mont entirely depended on this ſecret."
Lady Sweetland bowed approbation of
Louiſa's conduct (with a benignant ſmile),
who then again addreſſed her father, and
ſaid, " Of you, ſir, I beg a moſt graci-
" ous pardon. But as your return can-
" cels

" cels every engagement I have dared to
" form, in your abſence, as your will
" muſt implicitly direct and govern me,
" I'll try all in my power to overcome
" my partiality for Lord Belmont, ſhould it
" prove diſagreeable to you."—Diſagree-
" able to me!" exclaimed the Captain,
" Oh, no. Come to my arms, thou
" child of my boſom—thou comforter of
" my life! Lord Belmont is the man of
" my choice—my fellow-traveller and
" my fellow-ſufferer in the loſs of a be-
" loved deſtined wife. How his noble
" heart will be elated with joy, when he
" ſhall be informed that his lovely bride,
" and my long loſt child is but one and the
" ſame object! Heaven grant this hap-
" pineſs may laſt! Oh, my daughter—
" and ſuch a daughter—ſuch a pattern
" of diſcretion at ſo tender an age, as
" Lord Sweetland hath informed me!
" Happy Belmont! and oh, happy fa-
" ther, to be bleſſed with ſuch children!
" Can I ever be grateful enough to that
" all-ruling Power? But calm your emo-
" tions,

"tions, my deareſt Louiſa," ſaid he, ſeeing her extremely agitated. The words of 'deſtined wife and bride,' pronounced by the mouth of her father, overwhelmed her with ſuch an exceſſive confuſion, as covered her face alternately with bluſhes, and a deadly paleneſs. "Re-"cover, my deareſt child, from that "painful delicacy I ſee you oppreſſed "with—your ſorrows, as well as mine, "I truſt, are now at an end." Lord and Lady Sweetland animated her as much as poſſible, with the happy proſpect before her, ſo that ſhe ventured again to look at her father, whoſe hand ſhe kiſſed, watering them with her tears, which now flowed from a pleaſing, though painful ſenſation, at the preſent moment. The Captain then, by degrees, informed her of his meeting with Lord Belmont; of his exceſſive anxiety at not finding her in Florence; his deſpair for want of intelligence concerning her; the obſcurity relating to her name, family, and country.

Louiſa

Louiſa having informed him ſhe was not an Italian, yet ſhe had not mentioned what place claimed her birth. And as to her name, he at firſt had imagined it was De Polignac, though he had afterwards underſtood of ſome Italians, it was Reverſe, or Reverſa, he never having himſelf inquired of her about it; as time nor opportunity ever having permitted him any other converſation, but proteſtations of eſteem and unalterable affection. That under theſe occult circumſtances, he was ignorant where to direct his inquiries; and all the hopes he had left him, were to ſeek for her in Ireland (after having tranſacted ſome affairs in London), upon the bare information of her having fled from Florence to avoid the perſecution of Lord Croſslove, accompanied by a Mr. Meanwell, an Engliſh clergyman, and his ſiſter: that he arrived with him at Brighthelmſtone, where the exceſs of his melancholy, at her ſuppoſed non-exiſtence,

had

had indiſpoſed him too much to leave his lodgings, being confined to his bed with a ſlight fever, which, he truſted, would not now be of long duration, as he intended to inform him of their mutual happineſs:—"And if my Louiſa is "of opinion, that after this happy revo- "lution in our circumſtances, her ſpirits "are not too much agitated to receive "Lord Belmont, I will introduce him "to her this evening." Louiſa made no other reply than with her looks, in which a certain diffidence announced her not being able to ſupport, at once, ſo much unexpected ſatisfaction. But Lord Sweetland addreſſing himſelf to her, ſaid, "My dear Miſs Rivers, why that miſ- "truſt of your fortitude? And why pro- "craſtinate Lord Belmont's felicity, by "depriving him of the pleaſure of ſee- "ing you? He is worthy your eſteem, "and your attention. Then let me be- "ſeech you to ſee him as ſoon as poſſi- "ble. For this ordeal once paſt, you

"will quickly recover your uſual ſere-
"nity: whereas by retarding it, you
"augment your inquietude, which, you
"are convinced, muſt give way to that
"exceſſive timidity and delicacy, if not
"to-day, it muſt infallibly to-morrow."
Lady Sweetland entirely coincided with her Lord's ſentiments; and added, "If,
"my dear, you were not appriſed of
"Lord Belmont's arrival, I would put
"a negative on your ſeeing him to day,
"as I am ſenſible ſo unexpected an inter-
"view would be too much for you. But
"that not being the caſe, I'll anſwer for
"your being poſſeſſed of more fortitude
"than you yourſelf imagine." Her father gently hinted it would give him pleaſure to ſee this embarraſſment once over. Louiſa, with a moſt enchanting countenance, taking her father's hand, ſaid,
"Do not think, my dear ſir, I have any
"reluctance to ſee Lord Belmont—Oh,
"no. It is what I wiſh, and have long
"hoped for. I only apprehend, that the

"exceſs

" exceſs of joy which the happy ſight of
" you animates me with, will not allow
" me ſufficient ſpirits to ſupport that ad-
" ditional ſatisfaction. I will, however,
" exert my utmoſt endeavours to give
" neither you nor theſe worthy friends
" of ours reaſon to complain, or to be
" alarmed." Her father embraced her, and Lord Sweetland entreated him to bring Lord Belmont to dine with him. " That I fear," replied Captain Rivers, " I cannot promiſe. It is now paſt four " o'clock (looking at his watch), I left " him in bed, where his deſpondency in-
" clined him to remain. The joyful
" tidings I have to communicate, will
" inſtantly, I am certain, rouſe him from
" that ſtate of languor; and in giving
" way to future bliſs, he will be as expe-
" ditious in coming to pay his reſpects
" here, as his own wiſhes can poſſibly
" prompt him."—" We dine at five," interrupted Lord Sweetland, " and we will
" retard it as much longer as you pleaſe."

"There will be no neceſſity for that," anſwered the Captain, "as neither Lord "Belmont nor myſelf will do much ho- "nour to your table. The happy diſco- "veries of this day have ſuppreſſed my "appetite. At ſupper we ſhall perhaps "be more compoſed: therefore dine at "your uſual hour, and I will return "hither with my friend with all imagin- "able expedition." Captain Rivers then took leave——Lord and Lady Sweetland prepared for dreſs, after a multitude of congratulations to their amiable young friend, who, on her ſide, was ſo agitated with joy, wonder, and admiration, at her promiſing happy deſtiny, as rendered her incapable to acquit herſelf of the etiquette of the toilette. Lady Sweetland perceiving her perturbation of ſpirits, begged her to omit that ceremony, as ſhe looked lovely in every dreſs; and adviſed her to retire into her apartment, and try to compoſe her ſpirits, with which ſhe gratefully complied. Captain Rivers on his return

return home was received by Lord Belmont with a moſt pleaſing ſatisfaction, mixed, however, with ſome inquietude at his long abſence; which led him to think he had received ſome wiſhed-for intelligence about Miſs Rivers from Lord and Lady Sweetland, and that he was gone in ſearch of her——" At which " I rejoiced, but could not help mur- " muring," ſaid he, " and being uneaſy, " at your not having ſent me notice, " previous to your leaving Brighthelm- " ſtone. But your return makes me " happy, and the more ſo, as your " looks confeſſedly proclaim your enqui- " ries have proved ſucceſsful."—" Suc- " ceſsful, indeed, to the utmoſt of my " wiſhes," replied the Captain. " Oh, " my Belmont, my friend, I have found " my child—my long-loſt Louiſa! My " joy knows no bounds, and I am almoſt " frantic. What a daughter Heaven has " thus preſerved for me—you yourſelf " ſhall judge! Imagine then, my dear

" friend, that the young lady, of whoſe " beauty and talents I entertained you " with above two hours laſt night—is my " child, my ſweet Louiſa: and it is to " Lord and Lady Sweetland I owe the " everlaſting obligation of her care and " ſupport here in England." Lord Belmont, aſtoniſhed, beyond example, at this wiſhed-for information, congratulated his friend, in terms, which ſufficiently denoted his ſincere regard and friendſhip for him. " Come, my Belmont," ſaid the Captain, " come and be an eye-witneſs of " the object of my heart's contentment. " Lord Sweetland expects you, and you " will be received by every one in that " family with a cordiality worthy their " ſentiments."—" Though ill-inclined to " go into company, from a depreſſion of " ſpirits," ſaid Lord Belmont, " and from " a ſlow fever which tenaciouſly accom- " panies me—yet was I a thouſand times " worſe, my heart could not refuſe fol- " lowing my friend, to contemplate his

" hap-

" happineſs, to join in it from my ſoul,
" and to pay my reſpects to Miſs Rivers,
" who, as your daughter, claims my
" higheſt eſteem. Happy might I flatter
" myſelf, to be one day or other bleſt
" with the ſight of my lovely incognita.
" But ſhould my adverſe fate ſtill perſe-
" cute me, and I am doomed to ſuffer,
" yet can I not be completely wretched,
" whilſt Captain Rivers honours me with
" his friendſhip." In ſaying theſe words, he fetched a deep ſigh, and looked ſo pale, and ſo dejected, that his friend heſitated whether he ought to acquaint him with the wonderful diſcovery he had to communicate. And as the Captain had ſufficient reaſon to appear chearful, it was difficult for him to aſſume a grave aſpect: therefore he ſmilingly ſaid, " Come,
" Lord Belmont, have courage—your
" caſe is, perhaps, not ſo deſperate as
" you imagine. Recollect my paſt deſ-
" pairing ſituation, and admire with me
" its happy reverſe. Some means, I doubt

" not, will be found to aſſiſt you in diſ-
" pelling that melancholy which you ſeem
" to cheriſh. And I have the preſumpti-
" on to think, that my daughter will, in
" ſome meaſure, contribute to the re-
" gaining of your health and ſpirits."
Lord Belmont, looking ſtedfaſtly upon his friend, aſked him upon what grounds he founded ſuch a miracle? for nothing leſs than a miracle, added he, could effectuate ſuch an internal change; not but that it would ill become him to appear with a mournful countenance, before ſuch an accompliſhed young lady as Miſs Rivers, he therefore would exert his utmoſt efforts to caſt off the gloom which overwhelmed him, whenever he ſhould have the honour of being in her preſence, which although it would relieve him for the time being, yet, he was very well aſſured that in her abſence he would be infinitely more affected at the loſs of that object in whom ſimilar beauty and perfections were united.
" Then upon what foundation do you
" ground

"ground your ſuppoſitions?" added he:
"Upon that foundation," replied the Captain, "which makes me the happieſt "of mankind; and in being ſuch, can "you be miſerable? Oh, my Belmont, "your incognita and my Louiſa are but "one." Lord Belmont ſtaggered, turned pale, and, as doubting the aſſertion, or miſtruſting the organs of his hearing, cried out, "Why do you mock me, my friend? it is "impoſſible I have underſtood you right. "Captain Rivers would not thus ſport "with my miſeries; yet the ſound and "ſenſe of his words were pleaſing to "my mind. Oh, repeat them, and make "me happy or miſerable for ever."
"Then," ſaid the Captain, "be as "happy as I am myſelf. It was my "Louiſa to whom you preſented the fan "ſhe had dropped in the drawing-room "—It was her you danced with at Flo-"rence—It was her you plighted your "faith to, at Madame de Polignac's—It "is her that was perſecuted by Lord

" Crofslove; and though it is not from
" her I obtained all theſe particulars,
" which I learned from yourſelf, yet ſhe
" has given me ſufficient information to
" know ſhe is your incognita, and ſhall
" be your wife."

Lord Belmont almoſt wild with joy, ſcarce knowing whatever he ſaid or did, embraced the Captain, called him his father, his protector, his deliverer, a thouſand times over, to the great ſatisfaction of his friend, who was thereby thoroughly convinced how tenderly he loved his daughter, which promiſed permanent felicity to them all.

During Lord Belmont's dreſſing, Captain Rivers acquainted him with every circumſtance he had learned himſelf relating to his daughter, every ſyllable of which augmented his happineſs, and increaſed his wiſhes of throwing himſelf at her feet. Scarce would he allow his ſervant time to adjuſt his hair, &c. ſo great was his eagerneſs to behold his beloved long-

loſt

loſt miſtreſs. That wiſhed-for moment arrived at laſt, and our noble friends arrived at Lord Sweetland's, the inſtant the deſert had been introduced.

Captain Rivers, unwilling his daughter ſhould be too ſuddenly ſurprized at the ſight of Lord Belmont, had the precaution to ſend out for Lord Sweetland, in order to know whether ſhe had ſufficiently recovered her ſpirits to admit of a viſitor preſenting him at the ſame time to that nobleman, who anſwering in the affirmative, conducted them both into the room. Lord Belmont, regardleſs of etiquette or ceremony, threw himſelf inſtantly at Louiſa's feet, and unable to ſpeak, ſnatched her hand, which he tenderly and reſpectfully kiſſed, and looked on her with eyes where love and admiration were painted. Louiſa, confuſed beyond deſcription, and bluſhing like the new-blown roſe, incapable of withdrawing her hand which he held, cried with a faint voice, "Riſe, my Lord, I beg, and do not thus

"take

"take advantage of the weakneſs your "unexpected ſight hath reduced me to." He inſtantly roſe and begging her pardon for his temerity, ſaid, "Unexpected as "to the time, I hope, Madam: may I "not flatter myſelf it was not unwiſhed "for? Could the ſovereign miſtreſs of "my heart ſuppoſe, that the inſtant I "knew where ſhe was, I would not fly "to her with the eagerneſs equal to the "power ſhe has over my ſoul? then re-"ſtore that hand to me which you ſo un-"kindly have deprived me of." Louiſa pale and trembling, timidly ſtretched out her hand, which he immediately re-ſeized again, and fervently kiſſing it, ſaid, "Oh, Miſs Rivers, will you not bleſs me "with one look?" (her eyes being fixed on the ground) Upon which ſhe gently liſted up her head, and looking at him with the moſt amiable modeſty and moſt angelic ſmile, her face being covered with bluſhes, ſaid, "You forget, Lord Bel-"mont, here are other friends you ſhould

"pay

" pay ſome attention to."—" I live but " to obey you, Madam," ſaid he, and recovering, as from a trance, he addreſſed himſelf to Lady Sweetland (who, on his firſt entering into the room, had ordered her own family to their apartments for a little time, not chuſing they ſhould be a witneſs to a ſcene ſhe had partly foreſeen) begged a thouſand pardons for the unpoliteneſs he had been guilty of, but truſted ſhe would attribute it to his unbounded joy at having recovered a long-loſt treaſure. " A treaſure indeed, my Lord," replied ſhe, " and I heartily congratulate " you upon it; though I, in my turn, " muſt become a loſer by it."—" Not " entirely ſo," ſaid Lord Sweetland; " and I will make a bargain, that Lord " Belmont ſhall not engroſs her, but that " we ſhall have her company for a month " or two together."—" That lady ſhall " ever be her own miſtreſs," returned he; " but I will make a bargain too, my

" Lord,

"Lord, that you muſt admit me like-
"wiſe."—"A trio," interrupted Captain Rivers, "will, I hope, not prove diſ-
"agreeable; and, with Lady Sweetland's
"permiſſion, I will make one in the
"party."—That lady teſtified her approbation, with thanks, at the honour intended her; and deſiring Lord Belmont to place himſelf between her and Miſs Rivers, who had her father on the other ſide of her; and the young ladies having again made their appearance, the converſation became general; all was mirth, all was good-humour, and all was contentment: and there never was a party met together in whom inward ſatisfaction appeared more conſpicuouſly than in our amiable friends.

Louiſa, though rather ſilent, never before appeared ſo lovely in the eyes of her lover as ſhe did that evening. The elegant ſimplicity of her dreſs, or rather undreſs, being a ſprigged muſlin morning

morning habit, her hair unadorned with either flowers or feathers, but in a neat though careleſs manner, ſhaded her fore-head and neck, the whiteneſs of which vied with the pureſt alabaſter; her black ſparkling eyes, modeſtly bent downwards, unleſs when ſhe ſpoke; the amiable confuſion in her countenance, blended with inward ſatisfaction; all together made her look ſo inimitably enchanting, as made her appearance more like a divinity than an inhabitant of the world. Lord Belmont, as beſide himſelf with exceſs of joy in beholding, without reſtraint or fear from a moroſe parent, his beautiful deſtined wife, gazed on her inceſſantly with love and admiration. Nor could all the reſpect he entertained for her, added to that which he owed to the company preſent, prevent his rivetting his eyes upon her, till warned by the frequent bluſhes of Louiſa, who, though pleaſed with his conſtancy, yet plainly demon-

ſtrated ſhe was embarraſſed by his exceſſive attention. Perceiving then her delicate uneaſineſs, he exclaimed, "Who "could have imagined, Madam, when I "had the honour of your hand at Lady "Cagliari's ball in Florence, I was bleſs'd "with that of my charming country-"woman? And how was it poſſible "that circumſtance could remain con-"cealed from the knowledge of the in-"habitants? An object like you, exci-"ting the wonder and admiration of all "beholders, ought to have inſpired "them likewiſe with a curioſity equal to "that admiration; eſpecially as you had "reſided there three months before my "arrival in that city; when, on my im-"mediate inquiries, though made with "all poſſible ſecrecy, and apparent un-"concern, I was given to underſtand you "was of that country, and related to "Monſieur de Polignac; to which I gave "credit, the name ſavouring more of

"the

" the Italian than of the French."——
" You will pardon me, Lord Belmont,"
ſaid ſhe, " it was not at all ſurpriſing
" that I ſhould remain unknown at Flo-
" rence, conſidering the retired life we
" led for the firſt three months of our
" reſidence there; which was chiefly
" owing to Monſieur de Polignac's ill
" ſtate of health, and the plan of œco-
" nomy he had laid down, to retrieve
" and repair if poſſible the ſhattered re-
" mains of a once noble fortune, the ruin
" of which being only known to him-
" ſelf. His health then being the only
" pretext for leading a ſolitary life, and
" confining our amuſements abroad to
" walking and riding on the banks of
" the Arno; and at home, to reading,
" muſic, drawing, and needlework: and
" it was but a few days before his me-
" lancholy cataſtrophe that he expreſſed
" a deſire his lady and myſelf ſhould
" receive and return viſits; and the ball

" at

" at Madame de Cagliari's was the firſt
" public aſſembly we appeared in. You
" will likewiſe remember, that when
" honoured with the propoſal of your
" hand, I informed you, I was not what
" I appeared to be, neither a relation of
" Madame de Polignac's, nor of that
" country; and that I had particulars to
" relate to you concerning myſelf, which
" the arrival of Lord Groſslove prevent-
" ed my acquainting you with; and
" thoſe particulars are now partly re-
" vealed, but to which I muſt add, my
" hopes of having a father ſtill alive, on
" whom alone depends the diſpoſal of
" me: ſince which time, till the preſent
" moment, I have never had the plea-
" ſure to ſee you."—" Too well, Ma-
" dam," replied he, " do I remember
" the confidence you purpoſed to honour
" me with, as it filled me with anguiſh
" and inquietude, from the dreadful ap-
" prehenſion I entertained of your being

" pre-

" pre-engaged by compulſion: for per-
" mit me to own that your noble and
" charming behaviour to me flattered me
" with hopes your heart was free. What
" then was there left for me to conjec-
" ture, but that you was in ſimilar cir-
" cumſtances with myſelf, under the
" compulſion of an arbitrary parent.
" The thought was death to me, and
" could only be equalled by the torments
" I ſuffered, when on my return to Flo-
" rence, all intelligence with regard to
" you was denied me, and my fears ſug-
" geſted your being irrecoverably loſt to
" me."

" No complainings now," interrupted Lord Sweetland; " I bar all mournful
" tales in this ſociety; you are happy
" now, and muſt forget paſt ſufferings.
" You will find time enough for commu-
" nicating to each other your ſeveral
" grievances. This evening is deſtined to
" mirth."—" I will obey the injunction as
" much as in my power," ſaid Captain

Rivers;

Rivers; "yet there is nothing ſo natu-
"ral, when long-loſt friends meet, as
"to inquire into their reſpective adven-
"tures."

Louiſa then informed her father, that ſhe had, ever ſince ſhe was able to hold the pen, kept a journal, in which ſhe had regularly ſet down every tranſaction or event which had happened to her ſince ſhe was ſix years of age; and, with Lord Sweetland's permiſſion, ſhe would ſend a ſervant up to London the next morning, to fetch the box which contained it.—"It ſhall be done," replied his Lordſhip; "and it is an excellent "expedient to ſave the lungs of poor "Miſs Rivers, as ſhe would have a great "deal to ſay, and we thereby be de-"prived of her warbling; for I can aſ-"ſure you, Lord Belmont, ſhe is the "ſweeteſt nightingale I ever heard."

Louiſa's father was particularly pleaſed with the exactitude of her attention, in having

having thus procured him the ſatisfaction of knowing every circumſtance relating to his daughter during his abſence; and whiſpering to her, informed her, that ſhe, in her turn, would ſoon be acquainted with his hiſtory; which in due time he performed to her and to her friends. And after having informed Lord Sweetland that a perſon might probably be found, who, by being liberally rewarded, would ſet off by break of day to fetch this much deſired box, and his Lordſhip having aſſented thereto, they paſſed the evening with as much ſatisfaction as the felicity of their ſituation inſpired them with.—Lord Belmont's fever had entirely left him; and both he and the Captain did honour to the ſupper their friend had ordered for them, as neither of them had taſted any food ſince their breakfaſt.

This amiable groupe continued but a week longer at Brighthelmſtone, during which time Louiſa had given ſuch power-

ful

ful proofs of her talents, as made Lord Belmont impatient to call her his own, and endeared her hourly to her father; who, as well as her lover, was aſtoniſhed beyond expreſſion (on reading her journal) at the viciſſitudes of life ſhe had gone through, and at the wonderful fortitude with which ſhe had ſupported them; execrating the Prince de Courci and Colonel la Marche, and extolling the merits of poor Mrs. Birch, and the kind Dr. Worthy; but above all, of the good Mrs. Pianelli, and even thoſe of her huſband, whoſe errors, with regard to Louiſa, had proceeded merely from his affection towards her; and they both propoſed to give them ſuch tokens of their gratitude, as would encourage others, in ſimilar circumſtances, to protect helpleſs innocence. Monſieur de Bonfoi next laid claim to their thanks; and they ſincerely lamented the unhappy fate of the Marquis and Madame de Polignac, eſpecially Lord

Belmont,

Belmont, who had known them, and who ſpoke of them in the higheſt though deſerving terms to his friend. Lord Croſslove was not worth their notice. But what obligations had they not to Mr. and Mrs. Meanwell, who had extricated and delivered her out of the power of that perſecuting tyrants, and afterwards to the good Doctor their father. And although it could not be ſuppoſed Lord Belmont had reaſon to be pleaſed with young Meanwell's affection for Miſs Rivers, yet, too generous to call that a failing in another which he himſelf was guilty of in an eminent degree, he on the contrary pitied the young man's ſufferings from his heart, and ſaid he would be a friend to him, if he would permit him to oblige him.—But with what delight did he dwell on that article, where Louiſa ſo manifeſtly proved her unalterable conſtancy to him, though abſent, and in an unknown region, as to leave her beloved Mrs. Meanwell,

and

and accept of an aſylum at Lord Sweetland's, in order to divert Mr. Meanwell, if poſſible, from all attention towards her. And when addreſſed by Lord Melmoth for the honour of her hand, and obliged to own ſhe was pre-engaged, with what a religious perſeverance did ſhe conceal the name of the object to whom ſhe was engaged, to prevent his being made miſerable by it, or at leaſt become involved in numberleſs troubles and embarraſſments. Lord and Lady Sweetland next ſhared their ſincere acknowledgements. Young William Rivers, youngeſt ſon of Earl Rivers, was likewiſe gratefully remember'd by them, who, notwithſtanding his parents' diſpleaſure, would be civil to Louiſa.—In ſhort, not one to whom ſhe had the ſmalleſt obligation was to be forgotten either by the father or by the lover; and as they were both poſſeſſed of princely fortunes, the Captain having, beſides the treaſure he had brought from Algiers, many thou-

ſand

ſand pounds in the funds in Spain, which together furniſhed his benevolent heart with the means of giving an ample flow to his liberality. The caſket of jewels he had already beſtowed on his daughter, to diſpoſe of its contents as ſhe ſhould think proper, knowing her generoſity equalled his own; and already had ſhe preſented Lord and Lady Sweetland and their daughters with ſome very valuable diamonds and pearls, which ſhe compelled them to accept of. She had likewiſe informed her dear Mrs. Pianelli (with whom ſhe had conſtantly kept a ſtrict correſpondence, although ſhe, as well as her other friends, had remained ignorant of the name of her lover) of the happy change in her ſituation. She had alſo written upon the ſame intereſting ſubject to Monſieur de Bonfoi and to Mrs. Meanwell, all of whom felt an unbounded ſatisfaction at her promiſed and apparent happineſs.

Being arrived in London, Lord Belmont's firſt care, after having looked into his affairs, was to beg Captain Rivers would not delay any longer his felicity, but permit him to entreat his lovely daughter to fix the day for their union, which he granted; and Miſs Rivers, above all ſuperfluous formalities, conſented, but referred the naming of the day to her father, who agreed to its taking place as ſoon as the neceſſary preliminaries ſhould be ſettled. Previous to theſe happy nuptials, Captain Rivers was introduced to their Majeſties, and was moſt graciouſly received, but was requeſted by the King and Queen, to wait on them at the Queen's palace, in order to inform them of his wonderful adventures, and miraculous deliverance from ſlavery at Algiers, which gracious and flattering command he obeyed with pleaſure.

The

The amiable Miſs Rivers was the enſuing court day preſented at St. James's by her friend, Lady Sweetland, and deſervedly bore away the palm from the reſt of her ſex. She looked moſt uncommonly beautiful that day; Lord Belmont being in the drawing room, and their intended union being every where generally talked of, cauſed ſuch a ſweet confuſion in her countenance, by the alternate change of colour in her cheeks, that all eyes were fixed upon her. Lord Belmont's ſatisfaction at ſeeing her the admiration of the drawing-room was inexpreſſible, nor was her worthy father leſs delighted to behold his darling child the object of univerſal eſteem and good will. If Miſs Rivers had been capable of lodging pride and malice in her boſom, ſhe might have found a large field for diſplaying it, by triumphing over Lady Rivers and her two daughters, who, unfortunately to themſelves, were in the

preſence that ſame day, unnoticed in a large and brilliant circle, where they they formed a mere blank: but ſo far from aſſuming upon the preference ſo viſibly in her favour, ſhe, to the contrary, with the moſt enchanting humility, kept back (though urged on to proceed forward) as ſhe was to be preſented, in order her aunt and couſins ſhould precede her; which behaviour gained her unlimited applauſe. Captain Rivers alſo, notwithſtanding their unworthy treatment of his daughter, firſt in his brother's anſwer to Lord C——'s letter, the Engliſh ambaſſador at Paris; and afterwards at their own houſe, where both the Earl and the Counteſs had inſulted her in the moſt unfriendly manner; yet notwithſtanding which his humanity and excellent diſpoſition led him to viſit them, and had been received with a conſtrained civility, and with manifeſt confuſion at their paſt conduct, which denoted but too well

their

their averſion to receive his future viſits, not being able to bear the ſelf upbraidings his preſence occaſioned them; but our hero had fulfilled his duty, and of courſe was happy.

In due time Miſs Rivers received anſwers from her above-mentioned friends, full of congratulations on her new-born happineſs. Mrs. Pianelli, in particular, was beyond expreſſion laviſh in her demonſtrations of joy ſhe experienced on the occaſion. Mrs. Meanwell, beſides the ſatisfaction this fortunate event had given her and hers, had likewiſe the additional one to add of her brother's perfect recovery as to his health, his ſpirits being alſo greatly better, and that they ſoon intended to congratulate her in perſon, their return for England being fixed for the week following the date of her letter. Lady Belmont, in anſwer to her ſon's letter, not only avowed her conſent and approbation to his union with Miſs

Rivers, but expreſſed the peculiar felicity ſhe in particular ſhould derive from ſo amiable a daughter, who by her merit and virtues would ſoon compenſate for what ſhe had ſuffered from the apoſtacy of Miſs Dupeley; who, on being diſappointed in her ideal marriage with her ſon, had turned rebel againſt her in the full extent of the word, and whoſe anxiety to be united to a man of quality and a title procured her the puniſhment her falſe pride deſerved, by ſecretly marrying an unknown perſon, who, although he had aſſumed the title of Count, was proved to be, by his own confeſſion, a very few days after the ceremony, an itinerant quack doctor, and an Iriſh roman catholic, without a ſhilling in his poſſeſſion: and who made no apology for his deception, than the ſtale one of violent love for her perſon; the contrary of which having already manifeſtly appeared in his manner of behaviour to her, on finding

finding her unpoſſeſſed of that imaginary fortune his homage had been paid to, and entirely dependant on her bounty. Aſhamed of her connection, but not of her folly, ſhe had left Florence, and was gone with her huſband to Ireland, without having ever taken the leaſt notice, or making any conceſſions to her: that notwithſtanding this glaring ingratitude, yet in conſideration of her being her niece, ſhe had, previous to their departure for Ireland, ſent for her huſband, and promiſed him ſhe would ſettle two hundred pounds a year for life upon his wife for their mutual benefits, provided he would make her a good huſband, for which he gave his word and many thanks; but his wife had continued her ſullenneſs, and had left Florence without ſo much as either paying her a verbal or written acknowledgement for her favour. She bleſſed her ſtars, added her Ladyſhip, that Lord Belmont's affections were ſo

firmly fixed on ſo amiable an object as he had choſen, whom ſhe ſhould be happy to call her daughter; and finiſhed with hopes and wiſhes of ſeeing them united before her arrival in England, which ſhe intended ſhould take place in two months at fartheſt.

Lord Croſslove, after the imprudent ſtep of Miſs Dupeley, vowed vengeance againſt the whole ſex, and ſwore the beſt of them was not worth a pipe of tobacco, determining at his arrival in his own country, to retire upon one of his eſtates in Somerſetſhire, where the pleaſure of hounds and horns, with good October and jolly fellows, would be a thouſand times preferable to the flim flam, ſhallow converſation of ſqueaking women.

Every circumſtance relating to the wiſhed-for union being now compleated, houſe, equipage, and ſervants, all ready, the happy Belmont gave his hand to the lovely Louiſa. The ceremony was performed

formed in the King's chapel, in the preſence of her father, whoſe heart-felt ſatisfaction at the happineſs of his child, ſhewed itſelf in drops of joyful tears which fell from his eyes when near the altar, and in ſilent fervent thanks to that great power and all-ruling author of men's deſtiny. Lord Sweetland had the honour to give the timid, baſhful, bluſhing maid to her worthy lover. Lady Sweetland attended as a friend, and her daughters as bridemaids.

Every thing was executed with a magnificence and ſplendor worthy the fortun of the noble parties, who were deſirous that multitudes ſhould be benefited by the expences they would voluntarily incur on the occaſion. The Captain and Lord Belmont gave every where tokens of their liberality, eſpecially to thoſe who compoſed Lord Sweetland's houſehold: nor was the lovely bride behindhand in doing juſtice to her benevo-

lence of heart, by rewarding all thoſe of whom ſhe received the ſmalleſt ſervice.

The enſuing court day, Lord and Lady Belmont were preſented to their Majeſties on their marriage. Never did bride look more captivating than our charming Lady Belmont. Her dreſs was elegant, yet ſimple; magnificent, not gaudy; being a white ſilk ſpotted with ſilver, trimmed with crape, embroidered and ornamented with a fringe, alſo of ſilver. Her hair, neck, breaſt, and arms, were adorned with diamonds, not profuſely, but diſpoſed of with exquiſite taſte: nor was there any other colour ſeen in her, but that which nature had graciouſly painted in her cheeks and lips. All was white, pure, and innocent as her mind.

Dr. Meanwell and family ſoon after arrived in London: Lady Belmont received them with that affability and ſatiſfaction,

faction, which the ſincerity of her friendſhip inſpired her with. She introduced them to her father and to Lord Belmont, who, after teſtifying their unbounded thanks for their benevolence and care towards the object of their mutual love, begged they might have the honour to be ranked among their moſt affectionate friends, as they would do all in their power to deſerve ſo ſingular a favour; which was moſt cordially granted, and requeſted in their turn, by the good Doctor, his daughter and ſon: and effectually not a day paſſed in which the two families did not ſee each other.

Young Mr. Meanwell, notwithſtanding his recovered liberty, was viſibly confuſed on his ſaluting Lady Belmont on her congratulations: but ſhe in the moſt enchanting manner, reſtored him inſtantly to his tranquillity, by aſſuring him ſhe owed her happineſs to him, and that ſhe

ſhould

ſhould ever look upon him as one of her moſt eſteemed friends.

Captain Rivers, who had choſen to live with his ſon and daughter, although he had his own carriages, horſes, ſervants, &c. was prodigiouſly taken with Dr. Meanwell; he was of all their parties; and when either of them were inclined to ſtay at home the other would always paſs the evening with him. Lord Belmont, to ſhew his gratitude to Mr. Meanwell, preſented him with a living of near eight hundred pounds per annum, and promiſed him further preferment.

The Captain and Lady Belmont had not, on their ſide, been ſparing in acknowledging the obligations they were under to that worthy family, by preſents of immenſe value.

The Dowager Counteſs Belmont arriving in England, Captain Rivers and her ſon went to meet her at Dover, and conducted her to her daughter-in-law, who

became

became ſo great a favourite with her, that ſhe never was ſo happy as when in her company.

There was yet one circumſtance left uncompleated by this happy party. Louiſa had expreſſed a wiſh to viſit Mrs. Pianelli, whom ſhe was ſure would be made completely happy by this mark of her affectionate attention. Lord Belmont was no ſooner apprized of her inclinations, than he ordered every thing to be prepared for their departure, applauding his charming Louiſa for the generous thought. Her father, who every day diſcovered new excellence in his daughter's diſpoſitions and morals, approved exceedingly of the propoſal, and was to be of the party, as likewiſe Lord and Lady Sweetland and their daughters.

Lady Dowager Belmont parted from her daughter-in-law with the utmoſt regret, as did alſo Dr. and Mrs. Meanwell, though all admired and commended her

noble

noble way of thinking, and her abſence from them was not to exceed a month or five weeks at the fartheſt.

Being arrived at Paris, at the hotel they had choſen for their reſidence, they ſent word to Mr. and Mrs. Pianelli, (who were previouſly informed of their intended excurſion) that their whole party propoſed waiting on them the next morning, the ladies being rather fatigued, having juſt quitted their carriages; but how great was their ſurpriſe, when inſtead of receiving an anſwer by the ſervant whom they had diſpatched with their note, Mrs. Pianelli entered the room, and the inſtant ſhe perceived Lady Belmont, cried out, "Pardon this freedom, but I could not "withſtand"—— Louiſa no ſooner ſaw her, but ran to meet her, overturning her chair, and exclaimed as ſhe ruſhed into her arms, "Oh, welcome, my beſt be-"loved friend; my more than mother "to me, welcome." The good woman held

held her to her breaſt, and kiſſing her with a parent's fondneſs, while the tears of joy trickled down her face. Lady Belmont then preſented her to her father, whom ſhe immediately recollected, as he, on his ſide, remembered her likewiſe, though ſo many tedious years were paſſed ſince his leaving Ireland. Lord Belmont then came up to her, and in the moſt reſpectful manner, conducted her to a ſeat next to that of his ſweet Louiſa, where ſhe received thoſe unfeigned thanks and praiſes, from both father and ſon, ſo juſtly her due. Lord and Lady Sweetland likewiſe beſtowed on her every deſerving encomium for her uncommon benevolence and excellence of heart.

As Mrs. Pianelli had been informed of every particular relative to Captain Rivers, by Lady Belmont, as likewiſe of every circumſtance concerning herſelf, their converſation breathed nothing but happineſs and contentment on all ſides. They

engaged

engaged her to ſup with them, with which ſhe joyfully complied.

The next day, by invitation from Signor Pianelli, they all went to dine at his houſe; and were received and regaled by him in a princely manner. The good man ſeemed beſide himſelf, with joy at ſeeing Lady Belmont ſo happy, kiſſing her hand ſeveral times with reſpect and affection; and, after ſome converſation, he enlarged on her uncommon powers and ſkill in muſic, that being his darling paſſion, both as to the vocal and the inſtrumental parts of it.

Some time after dinner, Lady Belmont, ſenſible ſhe could not pleaſe him better than by performing ſome of his capital pieces on the harpſichord, propoſed their going into the muſic room, where ſhe begged Signor Pianelli would accompany her on the baſs viol; which was agreed to by all; but eſpecially by her old friend. Their concert laſted two hours:

and

and charmed every one of the party. Lord Belmont, in raptures at the delightful warbling of his Louiſa, could not forbear whiſpering to her, that ſhe excelled herſelf every day.

It was near one o'clock in the morning before our happy party returned home; Pianelli having inſiſted on the honour of their company to ſupper.—At parting, Captain Rivers and Lord Belmont preſented him with bank notes to the amount of two thouſand pounds for his paſt kindneſs to Lady Belmont; who added a diamond ring to it of five hundred pounds value—To her dear Mrs. Pianelli, ſhe gave her picture ſet in diamonds, and a ſuperb gold watch: all which preſents, both huſband and wife, though pleaſed with their generous proceeding, with the utmoſt reluctance accepted of.

During their ſtay in Paris, after having been preſented in form to His Majeſty, they went frequently to Verſailles, and

were

were always received by His Majeſty with uncommon attention and ſatisfaction; and the more ſo as that Prince had been informed of the happy revolution in the ſituation of Captain Rivers and his charming daughter.—The Prince de Courci and Colonel La Marche, whom they ſaw at court, were both treated with a diſtinguiſhed neglect. The Princeſs de Courci congratulated Lady Belmont on her marriage, and on the return of her father in a a complimentary letter; and received thanks likewiſe in writing. As to Lord C. the Engliſh ambaſſador, whoſe real intentions towards Lady Belmont having never been known, his generous offer of a penſion, and his writing to Earl Rivers in her favour alone, having been communicated by her to her father, both he and Lord Belmont waited on him to pay their reſpects; and were received and entertained by him in the moſt elegant manner. His Lordſhip giving a ſplendid ball on the

happy

happy revolution in Lady Belmont's ſituation.

They ſtaid juſt a month in Paris, ſeeing the good Mrs. Pianelli every day; and their departure was ſincerely regretted, not only by her and her huſband, but by all the nobility who had been honoured with their acquaintance. As for Mr. de Bonfoi, the brother of the deceaſed Marchioneſs de Polignac, they miſſed ſeeing him, on account of his ſudden ſetting off on a ſecret expedition to Naples, two days before their arrival, which he had noticed to Lady Belmont in a letter which was ſent to her at the hotel: his Lady having accompanied him, and his children diſpoſed of in convents, at a great diſtance from Paris, till his return. Lady Belmont, although ſhe regretted much in not having had the pleaſure to ſee him, yet ſhe rejoiced he enjoyed ſo advantageous a poſt, as he had a large family, and was far from being in affluent circumſtances.

ces. She contented herſelf therefore by anſwering his letter, and by entreating his Lady to accept of ſome valuable diamonds, which ſhe had taken the liberty to leave for her ſealed up at their hotel, as a grateful remembrance of his paſt kindneſs for her.

Our amiable party left Paris ſoon after; and at their return to England they were received by all their friends with open arms, and with the greateſt acclamations of joy; particularly by the Lady Dowager Belmont, Dr. Meanwell and family. Mr. William Rivers became a great favourite with his uncle and couſins, and was every day with them when not at Eton.

The lovely Louiſa, in due time, preſented Lord Belmont with a ſon; who, as well as her father, was tranſported with joy on the occaſion. Captain Rivers and Dr. Meanwell were choſen godfathers, and Lady Dowager Belmont and Lady Sweetland godmothers.

Never

Never did any pair enjoy more permanent felicity than Lord and Lady Belmont: their affection and eſteem for each other increaſing every day—they were bleſſed with a numerous offspring of both ſexes; who treading in the ſteps of their parents, became an ornament to their country.—The happy Captain Rivers lived to an uncommon age, always reſiding with his worthy children; and ſhewed, by his example, as did alſo Lord and Lady Belmont, that virtue is its own reward; whereas vice ever meets with condign puniſhment; as was manifeſted in the family of Earl Rivers, whoſe eldeſt ſon was killed in a duel in an infamous quarrel; and his eldeſt daughter was run away with, and married to, a menial ſervant. Their domeſtic broils augmenting and breaking out in torrents every day more and more, which all their much-deſired riches were unable to ſtem.

Lord

Lord Croſslove, in a few years, fell a victim to intemperance, and dying inteſtate, his amazing fortune devolved on Lord Belmont, as heir at law: who made ſuch uſe of it, as gained him the bleſſings of providence, and the univerſal good will, love, and eſteem of mankind.

THE END.

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